



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
J23ar
1844
v. 3

CLOSED STACKS
RESTRICTED CIRCULATION

CENTRAL CIRCULATION BOOKSTACKS

The person charging this material is responsible for its return to the library from which it was borrowed on or before the **Latest Date** stamped below.

Theft, mutilation, and underlining of books are reasons for disciplinary action and may result in dismissal from the University.

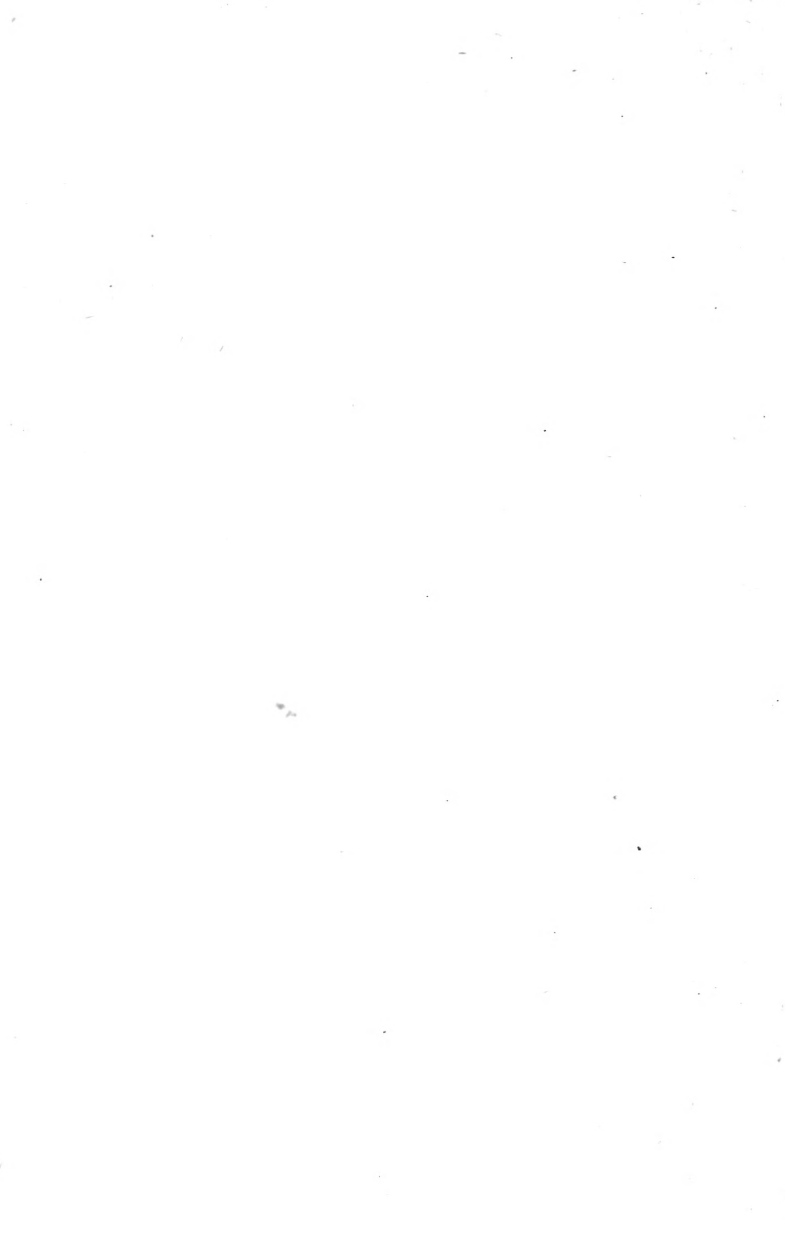
TO RENEW CALL TELEPHONE CENTER, 333-8400

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

DEC 19 1993

When renewing by phone, write new due date below
previous due date.

L162



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

ARABELLA STUART.

A ROMANCE

FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

BY G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

“DARNLEY,” “DE L'ORME,” “THE FALSE HEIR,” ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1844.

LONDON :
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

ARABELLA STUART.

CHAPTER I.

WITH a pale face, and trembling limbs, Arabella entered the apartments of the Countess of Shrewsbury, and, unable to speak, in her alarm, she laid Sir Thomas Overbury's note upon a small round table before her, and pointed to it with her finger.

“What is the matter, child?” asked the Countess, taking it up.

The moment she saw the contents, however, she became agitated.

“Good faith!” she cried, “this is wise advice, Arabella; you had better take it. Who brought this note?”

“One of my girls,” faltered Arabella.

“Well, well,” said Lady Shrewsbury, “a morning’s sail upon the Thames will do you no harm ; and no one can say, you have not a right to amuse yourself with a water-party for an hour or two. Quick, girl ; do not tremble, but get some few clothes together. Let your gentlewoman go down to the stairs with them. . You and I will follow ; and a barge in two or three hours will carry you to your husband’s ship.”

“But, Seymour—Seymour !” cried Arabella ;
“I fear more for him than for myself.”

“Leave that to me !” answered the Countess.
“I will send off a messenger instantly to warn him.—You get ready, quick !”

In a few minutes Lady Shrewsbury joined her niece in her own room. Ida Mara, with one small box in her hand, was already at the door, when the Countess entered.

“Where are the two maids, Ida ?” asked Lady Shrewsbury.

“In the waiting-room, madam,” replied Ida Mara.

“And the door shut ?” said the Countess.

“ Quick, then, go down ; and we will follow you in two minutes.”

Without reply, the girl quitted the chamber ; and Lady Shrewsbury, turning to her niece, kissed her cheek, whispering, “ Take courage, take courage, Arabel. I trust all will go well. ’Tis but a little hurry.”

The next instant, however, Ida Mara returned, with a pale cheek, and the tears in her eyes.

“ There is a guard at the foot of the stairs,” she said, “ who would not let me pass. He has orders, he told me, to stop every one, and turn them back.”

Arabella sank into a seat, and covered her eyes with her hands, while the Countess gazed down stedfastly upon the ground, in deep thought. At length she exclaimed,

“ Call the girl hither, Ida, who came in a few minutes ago.”

The fair Italian obeyed at once, and in a moment or two a pretty-looking maid, somewhat vain and coquettish in her dress and appearance, presented herself before the Countess.

“ Now, answer me truly, girl,” said Lady

Shrewsbury. "To whom did you show the note that was given to you a few minutes ago for your mistress?"

The girl's cheek turned crimson, and she was silent.

"Answer me," exclaimed the Countess sternly,—“answer me.—Your face betrays you!”

The girl burst into tears. "He took it out of my hand," she said. "I stopped a minute to speak with him; and he took it out of my hand."

"What is his name?" demanded the Countess in the same tone.

"Maxwell," faltered the girl.

"From whom did you receive the note?" asked the Countess.

"From Sir Thomas Overbury," was the reply.

"Get thee gone, trait'ress," cried Lady Shrewsbury,—“get thee gone! and pray to God to pardon thee, for thou hast done much evil.—Now, Arabel,” she continued, “take off your walking-dress, as I will mine, and let us consider how we must act. You will soon be summoned before the Council, be you sure. I will go with you, as is befitting. Were I you, I

would not deny the marriage; but, if they charge you with it as a crime, be bold, dear girl, refuse to plead before any such tribunal. Say, if you have offended, you have a right to public trial by your country, and boldly declare that the laws of the land do not justify a King in punishing without the sentence of a jury."

"It will but make him furious," replied Arabella.

As she spoke, the door opened unceremoniously, and a keeper of the Council Chamber appeared.

"Madam," he said;—but no sooner had he uttered the word, than he broke off, and, turning to some one who was behind him, exclaimed, "You need not go on, the Countess is here."

"Well, sir," said Lady Shrewsbury, "what now?"

"I am sent, madam," replied the keeper, "to summon you and the Lady Arabella to appear before his Majesty in Council, which I do by virtue of these presents, under his Majesty's hand."

"Well, on, then! we are quite ready to ac-

company you," answered the Countess, unmoved. "Come, Arabella, put on something to guard you from the wind, as we have to go all along these courts and passages. His Majesty, I presume, does not intend to make privy counsellors of us ; if he did, I might give him some good advice.—Give me that mantle, Ida. Now, sweet niece, put your arm through mine. You are a timid creature ; and it is well that you should have something stronger beside you."

Thus saying, she led the way to the royal apartments, followed by the officers who had been sent to summon them.

In the anteroom of the Council Room, however, they were detained ; and at the end of a few minutes Arabella was called in alone. During nearly half an hour Lady Shrewsbury remained alone ; and when at the end of that time the door opened, and Arabella came out, with her fair face deluged in tears, the doorkeeper pronounced aloud "The Countess of Shrewsbury !" That lady, however, paused to speak for a moment, to her niece.

"I have acknowledged all," said Arabella,

sobbing, "and am ordered back to my own chamber, and thence into custody of some persons to be appointed by the King."

"The Countess of Shrewsbury!" exclaimed the doorkeeper again, and, kissing her niece's cheek, Lady Shrewsbury advanced, and presented herself at the end of the Council table.

There was a very full attendance at the board, and every countenance was grave, and even sad, while that of the King was stern, and heated. Sitting on one side of his chair, he leaned over to the other, lolling his tongue out of his mouth, as he was much accustomed to do when excited.

"Now, madam," he said, — "now, madam, answer my questions.—Soul of my body! we shall have nothing but rebellion in the land.—Answer my questions, I say."

"Anything that your Majesty asks in reason," replied the Countess, "I am willing to answer."

"Well, then," said the King, "tell me, have you been conniving at the marriage of your niece, a lady of the Blood Royal, with one William Seymour, the second son of a pitiful family?"

"As good as your own, sire," replied Lady

Shrewsbury calmly, "only not quite the head of the house."

"Heard ever man the like of that?" exclaimed the King. "As I am a crowned King, I will commit her to the Tower."

"For telling the truth, sire?" asked Lady Shrewsbury; "that is a new offence; I have not seen the proclamation to that effect."

"Madam—madam," said Lord Salisbury, "be careful what you do.—Think what a thing it is to incense his Majesty, who in a moment can commit you if you show him a contempt."

"If I show any contempt of a legally appointed court," replied the Countess, "I know in what danger I stand, my Lord; but his Majesty himself told me to answer his questions, and then asked if I had connived at the marriage of my niece with the second son of a pitiful family? I reply, no; the family into which she has married is as good as his own, being descended from a long line of English nobles, and a Princess of that blood, which alone gives him a title to the throne."

"Then you acknowledge conniving at the

marriage?" said the Earl quickly, in order to stop the vehement and probably indecent torrent that was hanging upon the King's lips.

"I acknowledge nothing, sir," replied the Countess. "That my niece may be married to Mr. Seymour, I do not deny; but I am to learn if that be a crime in her."

"We will soon teach you that it is a crime, woman!" exclaimed the King. "Did you, or did you not connive at it, I say?"

"I will decline to answer that question," answered the Countess.

"Take care, lady," said Lord Ellesmere, the Chancellor. "To refuse unreasonably to answer interrogatories of the Privy Council is a contempt."

"I do not refuse unreasonably, my Lord Chancellor," replied the Countess. "I have strong reasons for not answering."

"Speak them, speak them," said the King: "there can be no just reason for not answering the King in Council."

"I have two reasons," replied the Countess, with a look of scorn, "both of which are good

and valid in the English law, whatever they may be in Scotland. First, that being told by his Majesty, the marriage of my niece is a crime. I am then asked whether I connived at it. Now the Common Law of England requires no man to criminate himself."

"Hout, tout," cried the King, "away with her and her common law. How should we ever have got to the bottom of the frightful and diabolical Papist plot, if the prisoners had not criminated themselves?"

"More fools they," replied the Countess of Shrewsbury. "But, next I have to say, that I will answer no questions in private. If I am accused of a public crime, I will have a public trial, where my guilt or innocence may appear. There I will answer all questions, and perhaps tell more than those who sit in high places may like to hear. I claim a public trial, I say. I appeal to my country, and claim my privilege as a peeress, to plead my cause before my equals in an open court. I will have no private interrogatories, which are but tricks and entanglements unknown to the law of England."

“Lady, lady,” cried one of the counsellors, “you are very rash. It is a well-established principle, that a refusal to answer questions before the Privy Council, touching matters wherein the interest of the state is concerned, is a contempt of the King’s prerogative.”

“Show me a case,” exclaimed the Countess. “You say it is well established—produce an instance where it has been so adjudged; then do with me as you will.”

“If there be not a precedent,” cried the King, while the Lord Chancellor spoke to some of the counsellors near him, “if there be not a precedent, it is high time we should make one; and you shall be the first, my bonnie dame.”

“If your Majesty be fond of making precedents,” said the Countess, still undismayed, “I hope your successors may be found to reverse them; for the dearest inheritance of an Englishman is the equal protection of the law; and I would lose lands and honours, rather than give up that right to any monarch that ever sat upon a throne.”

“It is the opinion, sire, of all the counsellors

here present," said Lord Ellesmere, "that to refuse to answer, is a distinct contempt of your royal prerogative; and although your Majesty, in your sense of clemency and justice, may be inclined to refer the question to the Judges for their decision, yet in the mean time it is perfectly competent for the Council to commit the lady, for safe custody, to the Tower till such decision be pronounced."

"Will you answer, lady?" asked the King; "once more I ask you, will you answer, that you may not have occasion to accuse our royal mercy?"

"I will not, sir," answered Lady Shrewsbury. "Your Majesty's mercy will stand upon its own foundation, and God grant it has a good one."

"Then commit her," exclaimed James, addressing the Clerk of the Council; "draw out the warrant, sir!"

"And mark, Master Secretary," said Lady Shrewsbury, "let it be put down on the record of this day that I claim my privilege of peerage, demanding open trial if I be culpable; and that professing myself willing to answer all lawful questions in a public court, decline to

reply to secret interrogatories, unaided by any counsel or advice. And now God be my defence !”

“ Away with her, away with her !” cried the King. “ Take her away in safe custody to her own chamber, till the warrant is ready. Let her have time to prepare what is needful, and then send her with a guard to the Tower. We have not often been so bearded in our Council ; and ’tis fit that she should be made an example.”

“ Many such examples would do the Court some service,” replied the lady ; “ and with that I humbly take my leave of your Majesty.”*

* The Countess was deceived in her expectations ; for the Judges confirmed the dictum that a refusal to answer questions proposed by the Privy Council in affairs of state is a contempt of the King’s prerogative. The best authority upon the law of evidence that we possess, Mr. S. M. Phillips, does not even except cases in which the person by his answer might criminate himself ; although it is remarked, in his notes upon the State Trials, that in such a case the council would probably, in the present day, allow the general principle of the law to maintain, that no person is compellable to criminate himself, or supply any information which would have that tendency. I need hardly tell the reader that the accounts of this celebrated scene vary in many particulars ; but all agree that the Countess refused to answer in private, appealing to a public court.

Thus saying, she withdrew, escorted to her own apartment by two of the ushers, who treated her with all respect, but stationed themselves at the door till a formal order for her removal to the Tower arrived.

CHAPTER II.

THERE is something very curious in the great difference of feeling with which we contemplate scenes of sorrow and those of vice. It might be naturally supposed, that in the grief of the good, the wise, and the noble, we should find matter only for sympathy and regret, that pain alone would be elicited in beholding it, and that their anguish would communicate nothing but a share of their suffering to ourselves ; while the contempt that we feel for vice, by depriving us of all feeling for the vicious, would leave us sorrowless, though abhorrent of their faults.

Such is not the case, however ; and, to hear tales of the great and generous touched by the hand of undeserved adversity, excites, as is the case in deep tragedy, a certain degree of strange,

and almost unaccountable pleasure, even while we grieve for their fate, and take part in their sufferings. It is, perhaps, in some degree that sympathy is in itself a pleasurable emotion ; but I do believe that a great part of that which gives sweetness to the tears which we shed over the history of the afflicted good, is the inherent conviction in the mind of man, that there is a state of being, yet to come, where all shall have its compensation,—where woes undeserved, and unmerited pangs, received with resignation and borne with fortitude, shall be repaid by infinite joy and eternal happiness.

On the contrary, when we gaze upon the progress of the vicious and the criminal, however successful and prosperous in their brief space of action, to contempt and indignation, to disgust and horror, are added the same consciousness of a hereafter, and the certainty of an awful retribution. Thus, in these instances, all our feelings are dark and sad ; there is nothing to alleviate ; there is nothing to give light.

Nevertheless we must turn for a short space to the more criminal personages of our tale, and trace

them in that rapid down-hill road, where vice treads upon the steps of vice, and iniquity upon iniquity, till they are hurried on into the yawning gulf of destruction and despair.

It was in a splendid room, at the princely mansion then called Northampton House, but which has since assumed the name of other possessors, of a purer fame than his who built it, that the Countess of Essex, who had left the court at Greenwich the day before, sat alone with Lord Rochester—her relation the Earl of Northampton being then absent. Her face was all smiles and happiness. It seemed as if fortune and success lived in her eyes; and she was laughing gaily with her weak and criminal lover, over the misfortunes of others more virtuous than herself.

“And so,” she said, “he wanted thee to wed this moon-sick girl, and, I dare say, would have made thee a sonneteer to match her.”

“Faith, he must have written the sonnets himself, then,” answered Rochester; “for, I thank my stars, I never could jingle two rhymes together in my life; and, to say truth, I hate the whole race of these beggarly poets and au-

thors. I have never liked Francis Bacon since he wrote a book."

"I never liked him at all," replied the Countess, "and that would certainly not make me like him more. One never knows how soon one may be put into one of these volumes, which is what makes all great statesmen hold aloof from authors, and keep them down."

"They are not all wise enough to do so," answered Rochester; "but Salisbury himself is beginning to see the folly of giving him any encouragement, though he be such a friend of Sir John Harrington's. I was telling him the other day, what a fool I thought Bacon for degrading himself by composing that book; and he replied, that it was well to be able to write it, but foolish to write it."

"But poems are even worse than that," said the Countess. "I dare say this friend of thine is a poet, if one knew the truth."

"No, I think not," replied Rochester; "with all his faults he has not that vice."

"Well, and what did you say to him?" continued the Countess, bringing the conversation

back to a subject on which her curiosity was excited. "What did you say, when he pressed you so vehemently to this fine alliance?"

"I said I would none of it," answered Rochester; "for the best of all reasons, because I was going to marry you."

"Did you tell him so?" asked the Countess eagerly.

"Yes, sweet one," replied her lover; "I wished him to know it. 'Tis too fair a fortune, my love, to be concealed."

"Now," cried the Countess, "I will wager this diamond against a flint stone, that he strove to dissuade you. Was it not so, Rochester?"

"Yes, good sooth," answered her lover, laughing.

"Ay, but eagerly," said the Countess,—“vehemently?"

"Even so," rejoined Rochester; "but he might have spared his eloquence, my fair Frances; for he moved me no more than a gust of wind."

"Nay, but what did he say?" demanded Lady Essex.

“ Oh, that matters not,” answered the favourite ; “ a great deal I have forgotten.”

“ But I will hear,” exclaimed his mistress. “ I will never love you more, Rochester, if you do not tell me. Now, do not smile and look deceitful ; for I will hear, word for word, all that he said.”

“ Nay, nay,” cried Rochester, “ that is hardly fair. What two men will say to one another often bears no repeating.”

“ The man that cannot confide in me, does not love me,” rejoined the Countess, withdrawing her hand, and moving farther from him.

“ Well, but you know I love you,” answered Rochester.

“ Then prove it, by telling me what he said,” cried the Countess. “ If you do not, I shall think you are false and forsworn, and are inclined to follow his counsel and marry some one else.— Yes, yes, I see it very well.—He has succeeded with thee, Rochester, and thou art inclined to seek another bride.—Well, it matters not ; I should soon learn to forget the man who would not trust me.”

“Nonsense, nonsense, sweet girl!” he replied ;
“you are jealous without cause. I am all your
own—your slave—your captive.”

“Then tell me what he said,” exclaimed the
Countess, suffering a portion of her natural vehemence to appear even to him.

“But you will be angry,” rejoined Rochester.
“Why should I tell you what will only pain,
grieve, and offend you, and which had no more
effect upon me than the idle wind?”

“Because I wish to know,” she exclaimed.
“Because I must know, if I am to have peace or
rest. I will not be angry ; and I will try to be as
little grieved as possible ; for if I find men speak
ill of me, and bark at me with their foul tongue, I
will recollect that it is all for Rochester, and that
shall be my consolation.”

“Well, then,” said Rochester, “if you will
not be angry, he did oppose my marriage with
you in vehement and rough terms,” — and her
lover went on weakly to tell her almost all that
his friend had said.

He strove to soften it, 'tis true, to put it in
general terms, and to conceal the harsh epithets

that Overbury had used ; but the Countess would hear all, and with instant perception discovered whenever he tried to deceive her in a word. She kept her temper, too, to the end, sometimes urging him playfully, and affecting to laugh at the rude terms which Overbury had used towards her, sometimes pressing him gravely to deal fairly by her, and to speak the truth, sometimes suggesting the words herself in a gay tone, as if she were sure that those were the epithets he had given her, and cared little for them. But when the whole story was told, her fierce indignation burst forth.

“ The villain ! ” she exclaimed—“ the base villain ! Can you consider this man as your friend, Rochester, after such words as those to your affianced wife ? Can you believe that he sought to serve you ? Can you suppose that anything but his own interest injured, and his schemes for his own benefit defeated, could have induced him to speak thus of a lady whom you love ?—No, no, the man betrays himself !—It is evident that he spoke with the rage of disappointment. It was for his own advancement that he sought to

marry you to the Lady Arabella, not for your benefit. If it had been merely out of regard for you, would he have thus abused her who has sacrificed all for you? If he really loved you, would he have thus condemned her love? For whom have I made myself all that he calls me?—for whom have I risked everything, resigned everything? Did I ever give a thought to any other man on earth? With all his hatred and malice, he dare not say that; and had he possessed towards you one particle of true attachment, he would have learned to estimate that, which flings every other consideration but its love away,”—and, bursting into tears, she cast herself, sobbing passionately, upon Rochester’s bosom.

He had gazed at her with admiration not unmixed with wonder, as he beheld her lustrous eyes flashing, and all her beautiful features lighted up with indignation; and when the shower followed the thunder, he held her tenderly to his heart, and tried to soothe her with words of love and promises of everlasting affection.

“No, Rochester, no!” she cried at length, raising herself, and wiping away the drops from

her cheeks ; “ it is not for myself I care. Of me he may say what he likes, but he must not deceive and betray you any longer. He seeks but to make a tool of you for his own advancement ; and to it, he will not fail to sacrifice you as soon as the opportunity occurs. Your fortune and high favour, your noble qualities and distinction have, as they always do, created many enemies, all eager to pull you down ; and, in such circumstances, it needs but a faithless friend, to bring about a man’s destruction.”

“ I do not think he would betray me,” replied Rochester.

“ Not, perhaps, exactly betray you,” replied the Countess, “ for traitors are always despised even by those they serve ; and he is too cunning for that. But, step by step, he will undermine you with the King, if he be not removed. He will first begin by opposing our marriage.—”

“ If he do that, I will cut his throat,” cried Rochester.

“ Perhaps he will not do so openly,” continued the Countess, “ but he will speak of me to James as he has to you, and will beseech him all the

time not to betray his words. He will teach the King to think you weak, foolish, and intemperate, because you persevere in loving one who has devoted herself to you. Let this Overbury,—let him, if he can, or if he dare, make such sacrifices for you, as I have made; and then I will believe he is your friend. As it is, he must be removed.—Yes, if you love me, if you would wed me, if you would be safe yourself, if you would consult my peace, he must be removed.”

“Not slain,” said Rochester in a low tone—
“not slain—that I cannot consent to.”

“Nay,” answered the Countess, with one of her bright and beaming smiles again, at seeing that his apprehension of her meaning had so far outrun the reality, that any minor act of vengeance or precaution would seem moderate, “I meant not to slay him. You men are so vehement and violent in all your passions, that the death of your adversary is the only thing you think of. I am not so blood-thirsty, nor do I speak from anger, Rochester. I could pardon him all that he has said of me, did it not show me that he is dangerous to you, and that

if he be not removed, his presence near the King, will be the great stumbling-block which will throw down our hopes and wishes. He must be sent to the Tower, or into banishment."

"But there must be some pretext," said Rochester. "He cannot be punished without a cause."

"Oh! fear not," cried the Countess; "a reason will not be wanting. Shrewd must that man be, and virtuous beyond this earth, who in the courts of kings can walk so scrupulously as not to give, each day, pretexts for accusation. The wise and the good have fallen beneath the axe, and the best that ever lived was crucified; there is no fear that fair Sir Thomas Overbury has not abundance of such vices in his composition as may well move a monarch's indignation, with a good word to help."

"No," said Rochester, who had been thinking deeply, and was not yet brought fully to that utter shamelessness at which his partner in evil had arrived; "no, a means may be devised

for attaining our object, without bringing on my own head the charge of ingratitude. Let us give him the embassy to some foreign court, where he may wear out his days in peace and honour, neither obstructing our views, nor lost altogether to his own."

"But I will not have him sent," exclaimed the Countess, "to some high and honourable mission, which the best nobles of the land might strive for. I will not have him so honoured, that men may say, 'See, what is the reward of calumniating Frances Howard,—the man who called her harlot, to her promised husband, makes that husband's favour the stepping-stone to his own advancement. Lo! he is ambassador to France, or to the great Spaniards, and goes to carry the tales of her love for Rochester to the gay court of France, or the graver one of Spain.'—Stay, Rochester,—you shall send him to Russia! Let him freeze amongst the Muscovites, since his cold blood can never comprehend the fire that burns in ours."

"He will refuse to go," said Rochester; "'tis but another name for banishment."

“Let him refuse!” exclaimed Lady Essex; “and send him to the Tower. The King will be ready enough so to deal with one who rejects his offers.—Nay, Rochester, I will have it so,” she continued in a caressing tone. “You must not refuse me, if you love me. I vow you shall not see me more unless you consent. This shall be the price of our next interview. I might well ask you, as a gallant knight and true, to put that man to death who spoke against your lady’s name; but I forbear, you see; and in this you must obey my behest. Offer him Russia. If he refuses, the offence is to the King, not to you, and leave the King to deal with him. But be sure, unless he be far removed from the English Court, he will so machinate as to separate you and me, as he has parted those two unhappy lovers.”

“It was, in truth, all his doing, I find,” answered Rochester. “He never left the affair alone, till he had discovered their marriage; and he then incensed the King against them.”

“And they are really married?” said the Countess, in a tenderer tone than she had used;

“then they are happy ; for though they may be separate, they can yet think that there is that sweet bond between them which no king’s word can break.—That is a blessing that nothing can take from them. Do you not hate the man who could step in, and blast their happiness, Rochester?”

“I certainly do not love him for so doing,” replied the Viscount, “and thank him but little for mingling my name in the affair.”

“As he has done by them, so will he do by you and me,” said Lady Essex in a grave and sad tone, “unless you stop him, Rochester. We stand in his way ; our marriage is the obstacle to his ambitious views ; he will not cease till he has frustrated our hopes, or ruined us both. There can be no terms with such an enemy ; and till I hear that he is gone, I shall never see you without apprehension.”

“Well,” answered Rochester ; “well, it shall be done. I will ask the King for the embassy to Russia on his behalf. I know he aims at much higher things, indeed ; and nothing less than a seat in the Council, with some high office

in the state or household, would satisfy his ambition. But he shall be offered this embassy. If he refuse it, the consequences be on his own head."

"What! then you do see he is ambitious?" cried the Countess. "I wronged my Rochester's good judgment. I thought he had deceived you, and that you did not perceive the tool that he would make of you."

"Oh, I have known his ambition long," replied Rochester, "and was prepared to give it a check in due time. Perhaps, as well now as hereafter."

"Better, better far," replied the Countess. "Those who defend a breach, fire on the men who begin to climb the ladder, lest when they are at the top it be too late. Away then, Rochester, away! see that thing done; and, when you can tell me that the embassy is offered him, you may come back, and shall have smiles for your reward."

After those words they parted, Rochester hurrying to take that new step in the wrong course,

which was to carry him forward to many others ; and the Countess of Essex remaining to brood over her hatred and vengeance, till she worked herself into regret that she had not exacted more of her weak and guilty paramour.

CHAPTER III.

IN the times of our Sovereign Lord, His Sacred Majesty, King James I., of happy memory, that peculiar district of the world called Lambeth, was in a very different state and condition from that in which it is beheld now-a-days. It was not then a close, thronged, noisy, and somewhat turbulent parish, a borough in itself, sending members to Parliament, and having vast objections to church-rates; but it was actually almost a rural district, with an Archbishop's palace and church, a few houses gathered in the episcopal neighbourhood, and several fine old mansions, with their gardens extending down to the water, occupying the whole bank of the river opposite to Westminster and the Strand. Where now stand patent shot manufactories, and wharfs and warehouses, were then smooth, green, shaven

lawns and tall trees, and wildernesses, and terraces, and the aspect of the whole place, as far as the different style of architecture and gardening would permit, was much more like Richmond, without its hill, than the famous borough of Lambeth.

One of these houses, at a considerable distance from the archbishop's palace, was remarkable for its beautiful gardens, and for its broad terrace, edging the river, and overhung by tall trees. A flint wall, with a lane on one side, and the grounds of another house on the other, surrounded these gardens and shut them out from the vulgar, leaving them only open to the view of those who passed upon the water, on which side it was not more than three feet high. To the river, there was a private stair for boats to land visitors; defended, however, from intrusion by an iron-gate as high as the terrace-wall; and possessing a large bell, which, from time to time, gave notice of applications for admission.

About five o'clock in the evening of a day towards the end of September, a wherry, rowed by a single man, and containing no freight but

himself, glided close under the embankment of the terrace, it being then high water; and there, the rower paused for a moment or two on his oars, looking into the grounds above, as if very much admiring their trim propriety. After that short pause, he rowed on again, and his inquisitiveness passed unnoticed by any one, as the gardens were vacant.

In about a quarter of an hour, however, the same boat and the same man reappeared; but this time he did not pause, for there were three persons upon the terrace; a young lady of graceful and noble mien, walking a step in advance; an elderly, stately dame, talking to her at her shoulder; and a fair girl, with large bright eyes and dark, black hair, dressed in the simple, but lady-like apparel which, in those days of splendid costume, generally denoted the waiting gentlewoman, coming a pace or two behind, with an air of sadness, and her look bent down upon the ground.

The rower, as we have said, pulled on; and about ten minutes after he was gone, the young

lady whom we have mentioned, turned towards the house, saying, "I shall go in, Madam. Dear Ida," she continued, "you can stay if you like; for you have been kept in all the morning, and want air."

"Not if I can help you, dear lady," replied Ida Mara; "or sing to you, or amuse you. The best air I can have is your own looks, when you are happy."

"That cannot be now," replied the Lady Arabella; "but I am going to write to the King; so that I shall not want you for the next hour."

The girl bent her head, and remained upon the terrace; and the two ladies returned through the trees to the house.

Ida Mara took one or two turns, pausing from time to time to gaze upon the different boats which, with sails or oars, as the wind favoured them, skimmed fast over the shining surface of the water. In a minute or two the wherry we have mentioned cut across from the stairs at Westminster, and passed close under the terrace,

the man who was in it raising his head as far as possible, and examining the fair Italian with apparently curious eyes.

He went on some hundred yards beyond the garden wall, but then turned and suffered his boat to drop slowly down, the tide just beginning to ebb, till it came opposite the centre of the gardens, where he stopped, turning the head of the boat to the stream, and like a trout at the tail of a ripple, keeping himself from being carried further on by a scarcely perceptible stroke of the oars.

In a minute after, Ida passed the spot in her walk; and the boatman exclaimed, “Hist! hist!”

She started, and looked down upon him; but he was a man of middle age, with his hair somewhat grey; and though he was dressed as a common waterman, there was something distinguished in his appearance which belied his apparel.

“What are your wishes, sir?” said Ida Mara, approaching the edge of the terrace.

“Is this Sir Alexander Marchmont’s house?” asked the man.

“No,” replied Ida Mara; “it is Sir Thomas Parry’s.”

“Then this is where the Lady Arabella Stuart is confined,” rejoined the waterman.

“The Lady Arabella Seymour is here,” replied Ida Mara. “Not exactly as a prisoner, though by the King’s order.”

“You have a foreign accent,” said the man; “methinks it sounds like Italian.”

“It may well do so,” replied the girl; and was about to turn away; but the rower asked immediately, “Is your name Ida Mara?”

She started, and replied, “Yes; who are you?”

“A most unfortunate man,” he answered; “but one devoted to your lady, who has never forgot an act of generosity by which she saved his life. Tell her I have seen her husband, in the Tower, that he is well, and as happy as he can be, absent from her. Add that he is under scarce any restraint, can even go out within certain limits; and that I have promised him to bring her a letter from him to-morrow, if she will be here at this hour.”

“Stay, stay,” said Ida; “I will go tell the lady, if you will wait but a moment.”

“Nay, I will return in a quarter of an hour,” replied the man. “I may be discovered if I stay too long.”

“What name shall I give the Lady Arabella,” asked Ida Maria, “in case she should wish to trust you with a billet?”

The man paused and seemed to hesitate, but then replied, “My name is Markham, once Sir Griffin Markham. But tell her I have no schemes or conspiracies on foot.—I have done with those things for ever, and only wish to serve her, and show her my gratitude before I die.”

In about ten minutes after, Ida Mara was again walking on the terrace; and before long, the boat once more shot over from the other side.

“Here is a note,” she said; “here is a note. The lady gives you her best thanks. Will you be back to-morrow?”

“I will,” replied the man, bringing his boat as close up to the terrace as he could. “Now, throw it over.”

Ida, with a slight wave of her hand, tossed the

note into the wherry ; and Markham then said, “ It might be, that even if your lady or yourself were here to-morrow when I come, it would be dangerous to throw you the letter. You must give me some sign, if there be any watchful eyes upon you. What shall it be ? ”

“ If there be any risk,” replied Ida Mara at once, “ you will find me singing. Whenever you find us silent, you may speak in safety.”

“ Enough, enough ! ” replied Markham, and rowed away.

Without landing at Westminster as before, he directed his boat straight towards the Tower Stairs ; and leaving it with the waterman from whom it had been hired, he hurried on through several lanes and turnings, to a small lodging, amongst the manifold alleys by which that part of London was intersected. He there put on a livery coat, with the badge of the House of Seymour upon it, and making a small bundle of three or four books and some writing materials, he once more set out, and approached the Tower.

No opposition was made to his entrance, and

he was permitted to proceed to the very foot of the tower where Seymour was lodged ; for we can scarcely call it confined, as, at this period of his imprisonment, the restraint to which he was subjected was very slight. There, however, he met the Deputy of the Lieutenant, who stopped him, asking, "What have you got there?"

"Some books and paper, sir," replied Markham, "for Mr. Seymour."

"Let me see, let me see," said the officer ; and the pretended servant instantly untied the handkerchief, and displayed the contents for inspection.

The Deputy examined each article one by one, and finding nothing to excite suspicion, he said, "You may go on."

When Markham entered the apartments of the prisoner, however, Seymour was not alone. A gentleman in a clerical habit was sitting with him, but rose almost immediately to take his leave.

"We may feel for each other, reverend sir," said William Seymour; "though the cause of our

imprisonment is so different. It is in both cases most unjust."

"Nay," answered Melvin, the famous Non-conformist minister, with a melancholy smile, "the cause is not so different as it seems." And taking a pen, he wrote upon a slip of paper, which lay upon the table, the following quaint lines :—

*"Communis tecum mihi causa est carceris. Ara-
Bella tibi causa est ; araque sacra mihi."*

Seymour smiled, and shook his hand, saying, "May we both be able to defend the altar that we love !" And bidding him adieu, Melvin left the room.

"Have you seen her?" demanded William Seymour eagerly, grasping Markham's hand, as soon as his companion in captivity was gone.

"I have seen her," replied the other, "but have not been able to speak with her. The woman Parry was with her. I afterwards saw her Italian gentlewoman," he added, marking a look of disappointment that came over Seymour's countenance, "and have brought you comfort, at all events."

Thus saying, he took the note which he had

received out of his pocket and placed it in the prisoner's hands. Seymour read it twice, and pressed his lips upon it eagerly. "This is comfort indeed," he said. "Stay, Markham, I will add a word or two to the letter I have written.—How can I ever thank you, for what you have done for us?"

"How can I ever thank her," replied Markham, "for having refrained, when a word from her lips would have sent me to the scaffold? My life trembled in the balance! As it was, a grain more would have weighed down the scale."

Seymour did as he proposed, and then handed the letter to his companion. "Stay," he said thoughtfully; "stay—were it not well for you, to tell that good girl Ida Mara, who is truth and devotion itself, where you are to be found, in case of need? The King may not always leave my Arabella where she now is. In his caprices, he may remove her suddenly to some other abode; and if Ida knew where to find you, she might give you such intimations as are most needful."

“I will tell her,” answered Markham, “if you think she can be fully trusted.—But remember, Mr. Seymour, my own life is at stake if I am found here. I came but to collect some small means together, and return to the Continent with all speed.”

“You must not do for me, any thing you think rash,” replied Seymour; “but, for my own part, the dearest thing I had on earth I would trust to that girl without a fear.”

“So be it, then,” answered Markham; and the next day at the hour appointed, he carried the letter to the terrace below Sir Thomas Parry’s house.

Arabella and Ida Mara were there alone, and as he approached they were perfectly silent; but he had remarked a boat which followed him all the way up the river, at the distance of some two or three hundred yards; and merely saying, in a voice loud enough for them to hear, “In an hour I will be back,” he tossed the letter lightly on the terrace and rowed on.

When he returned, he found the fair Italian there alone; and, it being by this time twilight,

he paused to hold some conversation with her, informing her where and how she was to find him, in case of need, under his assumed name. On this occasion, as the night before, Ida threw a note for her lady's husband into the boat ; and during ten days a constant communication between Seymour and Arabella was kept up by the same means.

At length, one evening, the moment he came near, Ida Mara, who was sitting beside her mistress, on one of the benches with which the terrace was furnished, raised her rich melodious voice and began to sing.

SONG.

“Row on, row on ! Another day
May shine with brighter light ;
Ply, ply the oars, and pull away,
Thou must not come to night.

Clouds are upon the summer sky,
There 's thunder on the wind ;
Pull on, pull on, and homeward hie ;
Nor give one look behind !

Bear where thou go'st the words of love ;
Say all that words can say,

Changeless affection's strength to prove ;
But speed upon the way.

Oh ! like yon river could I glide,
To where my heart would be,
My bark should soon outsail the tide,
That hurries to the sea.

But yet a star shines constant still,
Through yonder cloudy sky,
And hopes as bright, my bosom fill,
From faith that cannot die !

Row on, then, row ! God speed thy way !
Thou must not linger here ;
Storms hang about the closing day ;
To-morrow may be clear."

The boat glided on ; and that day Markham had no good news to carry back to William Seymour ; for though he rowed more than once past the gardens, neither Arabella nor Ida Mara were on the terrace. When he returned to the Tower some difficulty was made in admitting him ; and the moment he entered the prisoner's room, when he had obtained permission to see his master, as he called him, Seymour exclaimed, " You have bad tidings, Markham ; I am prepared to hear them."

“I have no tidings at all,” was the reply. “The lady and the pretty Italian were both upon the terrace, but they gave me the sign agreed upon, to show that danger was near ; and when I returned there was no one there.”

“Something has been discovered,” said Seymour, “for I have had my liberty, such as it was, abridged. I am now forbidden to pass the gates. Something has been discovered, depend upon it.”

“Perhaps not,” answered Markham ; “for, as I rowed down just now, I saw a boat with a guard evidently conveying a prisoner hither ; and as to the affair at Sir Thomas Parry’s house, a thousand accidents might have made them wish me to keep off. His stately old lady herself might be walking in the garden ; there might be some of the King’s officers there, or expected ; but I will hie me home with all speed ; and if there be anything to communicate, depend upon it I shall either have a message or a visit from Ida Mara. I know not how it is, that girl seems to win the confidence of every one. I saw good Sir Harry West yesterday, as I promised you. He said

he had seen and conversed with you, and so would say no more ; but he spoke of that girl as if she were an angel."

" Well he may so speak," replied William Seymour ; " for she nursed him through the plague, at a time when fathers fled from their children, and children abandoned their parents. But I did see Sir Harry ; and the good old knight — though, heaven knows, in former times he tried to dissuade me from what he called my rash love, as if he could have foreseen all the wretchedness it has produced now — urges me strongly to make my escape with Arabella at any risk, rather than linger here ; where, as he truly says, I may be shut up for years, — perhaps for life, like Raleigh or Grey."

" He is right, too," said Markham ; " and the sooner it is done, depend upon it, the better. You have committed no offence against the law ; you are unjustly detained by the mere will of the King ; and, if I had been with Sir Harry I should have joined my voice to his."

" But I showed him it was impossible even to attempt it," replied Seymour ; " for I had then

pledged my word not to go beyond certain limits, and that could not be broken. Now, however, I am free from that bond ; for they have taken from me the degree of freedom for which I made the engagement ; and, with whatever other fetters they may think to enthrall me, I may yet find means to cast them off when they least expect it. However, my kind and devoted friend, do you return home, and, if possible, see this excellent Italian girl. Let her tell her mistress that, whatever happens, I am determined to attempt an escape. Arabella must hold herself prepared to go with me, or to follow me ; and I will beseech all my friends, and you in particular, Markham, to bend every thought and energy to secure her flight. Think not of me, I will take care of myself ; and free myself from this tyranny by some means. Watch you over Arabella ! I would fain, too, free the Countess of Shrewsbury, who is, I find, imprisoned in the apartments next to those of Raleigh ; but they will not suffer me to hold the least communication with her, which I grieve for deeply, as it is by

favouring me, that she has brought this misfortune on her head."

"Think of yourself, think of yourself, good friend," said Markham; "they will not keep the Countess long when you are gone. As for your lady-wife, be sure, that to her safety I will sacrifice my own. She once risked hers for me; and all the life I have is hers, to do with as she likes. I will ensure that, let them guard her how they will, she shall be safely put on board a ship bound for some foreign country. I am not new to stratagems; and, alas!—though for some years now they have had meaner things to do with than monarch's crowns as formerly,—in seeking a bare subsistence as a banished man, I have been in constant practice, I assure you. Sir Harry West will help me, too; and I think my good Lord Hertford will furnish us with means."

"That he will," replied Seymour, "to the utmost of his power. But, I am not without some wealth myself, Markham; and, as you may be called upon to act more suddenly than you

expect, you had better take a part of what I have here. There are two-hundred nobles in this bag.—Take it, take it. I have more than I shall need ; and now away, for I fear every minute, lest Ida should seek you at your lodgings, and find you absent.”

Without further delay Sir Griffin Markham left the prisoner and hurried on towards his obscure lodging in the lanes not far off. But ere we relate what occurred by the way, we must turn once more to the courtly scenes of the palace, and, as is our custom occasionally, retrograde for a few hours in point of time.

CHAPTER IV.

“Now shall you see Sir Thomas Overbury with pink roses in his shoes, a rapier fit for a Castilian Don, mustachios curling to the moon, and a beard of the most approved cut !” exclaimed Bradshaw, addressing Graham. “The barber has been labouring upon him for an hour and a-half this morning. Sixteen new pairs of Spanish leather gloves, with pumps of Cordova, and a new velvet jerkin, reached his lodging last night. His ruff has broken the heart of the laundress ; and his hose—Heaven help us ! saw ever man the like of his hose ? One would suppose his nether man a jewel of rare price, to be thrust into such an elaborate casket. I will warrant you, he will trip by upon the tips of his toes, with a ‘Give you good den, dear Master Bradshaw ! Good den, Master Graham !—the King favours you both.—You are likely young men ;’” and he

mimicked the affected tone of some of the superfine courtiers of the day.

“ But what is the cause of all this ?” asked Graham, who took him literally. “ What has happened to him ?”

“ Oh ! sir ; he is in the high way to fortune,” answered Bradshaw. “ As a sconce in a corner of a room reflects suddenly the light of a candle which the housemaid brings in in her hand, and another sconce over the chimney catches a gleam from it, so shines the King’s favour upon Rochester and is reflected from Rochester to Overbury ; and you may argue from the premises, that they are both to be lighted up anon, as far as the oil and wick will go ; though, to say sooth, the reel and cruise are both somewhat low in the royal closet. The people must be pinched, sir ; the people must be pinched. What is the nation, but a great gold sponge, to yield its juices under the King’s pressure ? However, my mother whips me, and I whip my top ; Rochester smiles upon Overbury, and the King smiles upon Rochester. Did you not see,

how the favourite took his favourite by the ear just now, led him to the royal door, then thrust him in, so that he well nigh fell at the King's feet, to thank him for his bounties before he knew what they were?"

"I thought Overbury was somewhat out of favour," replied Graham; "there was a report of a quarrel between him and Rochester about the Lady Essex; and don't you remember, when we were at Greenwich, people said, the King suspected him of giving poor Lady Arabella a hint to run away?"

"Bless your ignorance, Graham!" cried Bradshaw; "he is a carpenter—a joiner, who saws things in two, and glues them together again with a dexterity quite marvellous. No sooner is a hole made than it is patched up again; and, for darning on new favours to old ones, he is better than any tailor in the land. Have you not seen how Rochester hangs upon him, and calls him Tom? and, moreover, the King gave his good lordship five thousand pounds upon a hint from Overbury. No, no; you will see

him a great man soon ; but whether it will be secretary, or lord keeper, or lord mayor, who can tell ?”

While such conversation was going on in the anteroom, the object of it was in the King's closet with James, alone. He had been suddenly called from his own chamber by Rochester, and hurried, without information of what was the matter in hand, into the presence of the King. Rochester then immediately closed the door and left him there, having previously brought the Monarch to the exact pitch he desired.

The description of Overbury's entrance had, indeed, been somewhat caricatured by Bradshaw : but though he did not exactly fall at the King's feet, he made a profound obeisance ; for James loved the semblance of the most devoted respect, even while he was doing everything in his power to root out the reality from the hearts of his subjects ; and we learn from Sully, that in the early part of his reign, at least, he caused himself, upon all public occasions, to be served at table on the knee.

The King's face was evidently made up for a speech; and Sir Thomas Overbury, with his eyes cast down, waited in silence for what was to come next.

“ Sir Thomas,” said the Monarch, after a brief pause, “ you are well aware of the high estimation in which we hold your abilities; and we now intend to give you a proof of the confidence which we have both in your honesty and judgment, by placing you in a situation of high trust and confidence, where you may have some matters of great difficulty to handle, and some acts of great importance to perform. In the conduct of these proceedings you will always have to bear in mind your duty to God, which is best displayed in the service of the King. To that, sir, you are bound to sacrifice every other consideration, and to show yourself worthy of Heaven and your Sovereign by diligence, devotion, and faithfulness. Upon these three heads of diligence, devotion, and faithfulness, we shall expatiate for a moment.” And the King went on to show what he considered to be the duty of a

subject employed by a Monarch, which certainly left the poor instrument nothing but the state and condition of a slave.

“ You are not, sir, to undertake the ruling or governing of any matter without my especial commands,” continued James; “ that is a part of my craft, to which long experience, as well as the blessing of God, which endows Kings with qualities to fit them for the station of his Vice-regents on earth, has suited me especially. You may indeed suggest, reverently, anything that may strike your own senses, submitting your opinion wholly to the King for his decision and judgment, and remembering that to do his will, is to do your duty, without doubts, surmisings, and questionings, any farther than may be necessary to assure yourself of his purposes.”

We need not proceed farther with James’s harangue; it was very similar to many others upon record; but perhaps more strongly than on most occasions, it enforced his claims to passive obedience from his subjects; for which purpose he tortured several texts of Scripture in such a manner as would have justified the purest des-

potism that ever disgraced the earth. Five times he called himself the Lord's Anointed ; and there can be little doubt that, at that moment, his mind hesitated as to which of the two famous Monarchs he was, David or Solomon. He inclined, perhaps, to the latter ; but yet he had a strong hankering to be David too, only that he knew himself not to be a man of valour, mighty in war.

Sir Thomas Overbury heard him with every appearance of the most profound devotion and respect ; and, although he knew that the most pompous speeches did not always precede the most magnificent actions, he had little doubt that the least honour the King was about to bestow upon him, was that of raising him to the rank of Privy Counsellor. The Monarch ended, however, without informing him what was the dignity with which he was to be invested ; but, raising a sealed packet from the table, he placed it in his hands, saying,

“ There, sir ! there ! go your way, and meditate upon what we have addressed to you.”

Sir Thomas bowed, kissed the King's hand ;

and expressing his deep sense of James's goodness, though very little divining in what it consisted, retired with the packet.

The Knight hurried at once to his own apartment, where he instantly broke the seal and read. But though the countenance with which he had passed through the anteroom had been as full of buoyant satisfaction as Bradshaw had anticipated, the expression now suddenly changed to one of mortification, disappointment, and rage; and casting the paper violently down upon the floor, he exclaimed,

“Curses upon the traitor! This is his machination. When I have devoted my whole life to serve him, he goes about to ruin me.—Russia! —Russia! —Banishment! —Banishment to the farthest part of the earth; cut off from all communication, from all chance or hope of advancement; with no trust to execute, no negotiation to carry on, no opportunity of distinction! —A nation of northern savages.—Why not send me to the Cham of Tartary, or to Prester John? —Does he think that I will accept such a mission? —

Let him go himself if he likes it ; his abilities are well fitted for the task : ” and he laughed with bitter and contemptuous merriment.

“ Stay, I will write my answer,” he continued ; and he seated himself at a table ; but scarcely had he taken the pen in hand, when one of his servants entered, announcing the Lord Rochester. A spasm of repressed rage passed over Overbury’s countenance, but instantly vanished ; and he received the favourite with a forced smile.

“ Why, what are you about, Tom ? ” cried Rochester, entering and casting his well-dressed and graceful limbs into a chair. “ I expected to find you capering about the room, in joy at some gracious favour bestowed upon you by his Majesty.”

“ Oh, no ! ” answered Overbury. “ I am a grave and serious man, my Lord ; and as to what I am about, I am writing to his Most Gracious Majesty, to thank him for the honour conferred upon me, but begging to decline it.”

“ Decline it ? ” exclaimed Rochester, with every appearance of surprise and consternation : “ pause,

and think a moment, Overbury. What in the name of fortune, can the King have offered, that any of his subjects should dare to decline?"

"Nay, my Lord, you know right well," replied Sir Thomas Overbury, "that this is a thing I cannot accept."

"Really," replied Rochester, "the King has not told me what he was going to offer you."

The reader already knows that this was false, but will not be surprised that in this case, as in all others, one vice brought on a second, or that lying should be consequent upon treachery.

Overbury gazed in his face for a single instant, and then replied, "I am happy to hear it, my good Lord; for the man who counselled this, did no friendly act to him who has ever striven to serve you."

"'Tis most likely the King's own act," replied Rochester. "You know how often he determines on such things himself. But what is it, Overbury? — It cannot be so bad as you seem to think."

“As bad as may be, my good Lord,” answered the knight; “it is a sentence of banishment—ay, and worse than the banishment of any ordinary criminal. He who conspires against the good of the state, and is yet cunning enough, as so many are, to go within an inch of treason, yet not overstep the iron limit of the law, is exiled reasonably to other lands, that his turbulence may no more disturb the peace of England. But the whole world is left him to choose where he will make his refuge. He may suit his whim, his tastes, or his complexion, as best suits him; he may range from the damp pools of Holland and the misty Rhine, to the far boundaries of Italy, may cross the Adriatic or the Hellespont, and become pilgrim to the Sepulchre. He is as free as the air to sweep over the whole world, except this island, and may make himself a country where he pleases. But in my case, I am shackled and tied down; my place of banishment is fixed to the most sickly and unfriendly region of the earth, amongst cold barbarians, unlettered, rough, and fierce; and all for the crime of—”

“Of what?” asked Rochester, seeing him pause.

“Of serving my Lord of Rochester, I suppose,” replied Sir Thomas Overbury; “for I know none other to charge myself withal.”

“Nay, nay,” answered Rochester; “you must be jesting, my good friend. Speak in plain English. Remember, I never could make out a riddle in my life.”

“Well, then, the case stands thus,” said Overbury. “His Most Gracious Majesty, from his particular favour to myself and you, proposes to send me to the Court of Russia as his ambassador in ordinary, there to remain till in his good pleasure he recalls me. Now, I foresee that the day, as well as the distance, will be somewhat long. I love not travelling; at least have had enough to cure me for all fondness for such journeys, and therefore am even now sitting down to write to his Majesty, declining the cold honour thus intended for me.”

“I fear you will offend the King,” said Rochester.

“Better offend the King, than destroy my-

self," replied Sir Thomas Overbury; "but, in a word, I will not go—I love not bears and wolves,—am somewhat chilly in my nature too,—and though fur cloaks are comfortable things, I had rather wear them for show than for necessity. Let him turn Muscovite or Turk who will. I will have none of such an embassy.—So, if you will permit me, as this requires a speedy decision, I will even finish my letter, that his Majesty may not say I made him wait."

"Well, well, if you are so headstrongly inclined," answered the favourite, "write out the letter, and I will carry it to the King myself, beseeching him to take your refusal in good part."

"Not so, indeed," cried Overbury. "I cannot think of making your lordship my errand-boy."

"But I must insist on doing it," answered Rochester. "You have done the same for me ere now; and no one can move the King in the matter, with such probable success as myself.—Do you doubt me, Overbury?"

"Oh, not at all, my lord," replied the knight. "I doubt no man, much less one to whom I

have been so devoted ;” and, seeing that he could not avoid intrusting the letter to his former friend, he proceeded to write an answer to the King.

“Pray make it humble and submissive,” said Rochester.

“As a slave !” replied the knight, and wrote on.

When the letter was concluded, he folded it, called for wax, and sealed it with his signet. Then giving it to Rochester, he said, “I really am ashamed of using you as a messenger, but I trust that in memory of the past, my good lord,—from many friendly passages between us,—and from my zeal and fidelity in your service,—which might have been somewhat rude, but never wanting,—you will use your best endeavours to obtain for me his Majesty’s permission to decline the honour he intended me.”

“I will do the best I can,” answered Rochester, “but you must not attribute the bad success to me, if I fail. I fear at best you will greatly injure yourself; but that is not my fault;” and away he went, saying to himself as he walked along the passages of the palace,

“That man must be disposed of somehow.—He suspects me, and will find some opportunity for revenge. I cannot trust him longer ; and yet I would not injure him, if I could help it. His own unruliness will be his ruin.”

In the meantime, Overbury sat with his head leaning upon his hand, in meditation bitter enough.

“He goes to complete his treachery,” he thought. “On my life, this feeble-minded favourite is as base as shrewder men ! ’Tis safer by far to serve a sensible villain than a weak fool. One is sure of the former, so long as his interest goes with ours : there is no security with a creature like that. He will ruin himself ; so ’tis no wonder that he begins by ruining others.”

With such reflections, the knight remained for about twenty minutes ; at the end of which time, Lord Rochester returned, with a grave face, accompanied by Sir Charles Blount. Overbury received them with politeness somewhat too ceremonious ; but Rochester immediately said, “I have made no way with your petition—the King insists upon obedience.”

“He shall not have it!” exclaimed Overbury hastily. “I have yet to learn that an Englishman can be banished from the land, at a King’s will, without any crime committed. I will not go, my lord—and methinks in his high favour my Lord of Rochester, if right willing, might have obtained a higher grace of the Sovereign than merely that his poor friend should have leave to remain in his native land, rather than to carry his bones to Russia but to leave them there.”

“You do me wrong, sir,” replied Rochester. “I have brought Sir Charles Blount with me, who was present all the time, to inform you that I urged his Majesty, as much as was decent, to grant your request.”

“He did, in truth, Sir Thomas,” said Blount.

“Then he has fallen, indeed!” cried Overbury. “I have known the time, Sir Charles, when if this noble gentleman had asked the King to give him half a province, he would have had it, either in land or money.”

“That is a different thing,” said Sir Charles Blount drily, “from asking a Monarch to permit

his subjects to disobey him. I doubt not his Majesty would rather give half his kingdom than bate a jot of his prerogative."

Rochester had sat while these few words were exchanged, with his eyes fixed upon the ground ; but at length raising them, he said, in an earnest tone, " I do beseech you, Overbury, for your own sake, obey the King ; and be assured that I will do my best to shorten the period of your absence, and to obtain your recall as speedily as may be."

This time he was sincere, for his heart somewhat smote him, and a dread of the reproach of men, when it should be known that he had dealt with such ingratitude to one by whose counsels and assistance he had prospered, affected him not a little.

There is something that all great men feel, and even meaner persons too, when raised to high station by accident or fortune, in the stamp which history is to affix upon their name, which overawes many a bad action rising up in their heart, and gives energy and vigour to nobler purposes. Vague it is and undefined, like all remote objects,

like fate — like death — like the judgment after death ; but still it casts its shadow over the present, and quells the dazzling brilliancy of pettier objects near.

Weak and short-sighted as he was, Rochester experienced its influence at that moment. To be branded with the stain of foul ingratitude for coming times, — to be marked out in the annals of the age, as one who had betrayed and ruined his friend, — to be held up for scorn and reprobation as a base and thankless villain in the eyes of his children and his children's children, somewhat appalled him ; and he wished that he had not taken the first step in a course so full of shame.

But Overbury answered fiercely, with indignation and disappointment, and the rage of a strong ambitious spirit mastering common prudence.

“ It is vain ; it is vain ! ” he said. “ I am a free-born Englishman ! — I will not go ! — Let him make me, if he can ! ”

“ These words are unpleasant,” cried Sir Charles Blount. “ Sir Thomas, I will take

my leave.—My Lord of Rochester, I must go.”

“And so must I,” rejoined Rochester. “It is useless to argue longer with him.”

“Good-b’ye, gentlemen both,” said Overbury. “Rochester,” he added in a meaning tone, “Rochester — take care !”

The favourite turned and looked at him with a glance of anger and contempt ; and saying, in a low voice, “I will !” he quitted the room.

In about half an hour,—it could not be more—a royal barge, containing a gentleman, with his arms folded on his chest, his head bent down, and his brow frowning, together with a small party of the guard and a messenger, was seen upon the Thames, close to the stairs ; and as the watermen pushed off towards the middle of the stream, the officer in command said aloud, “To the Tower !”

The gentleman which that boat conveyed to the gloomy abode of captivity and sorrow, was Sir Thomas Overbury !

CHAPTER V.

WE must now return to pursue the homeward course of Sir Griffin Markham, as he proceeded from the Tower of London to his little lodgings, in one of the streets at the back of Petty Wales.

When he had walked about two-thirds of the way, he perceived a female figure hurrying on before him, with a man carrying sword and buckler, a step behind him. She was wrapped in a large cloak, but there was something about her light figure and easy walk which made Markham instantly suppose that she was Ida Mara, and on passing by and looking at her face, he saw that the supposition was correct.

He instantly stopped to speak to her; but the girl, who recognized him, notwithstanding his change of dress, made him a sign to forbear and go forward; and at the same moment the ser-

vant with buckler and broadsword told him in a sharp tone to walk on, and not stare into the gentlewoman's face.

At length, at the shop of a silk merchant in a small way, Ida Mara paused, while Markham hurried on to his own lodging. After a few inquiries, and the purchase of some insignificant articles, Ida Mara herself proceeded on her way, telling the man who accompanied her, to wait where he was till her return, or till she called him. She was soon in the entrance of Markham's lodging, the door of the passage standing open; but just as she had passed the threshold, a hand was laid upon her arm, and a voice exclaimed, in a tone of surprise, "Ida!"

The fair Italian instantly turned round, and beheld Sir Harry West.

"In the name of fortune, my dear child, what are you doing here?" and, perhaps, in the circumstances of those depraved times, the good old knight might have suspected any other of the attendants of the Court of imprudent, if not criminal purposes, in coming thus with some degree of disguise to such a part of the city.

But Ida Mara was not to be suspected ; and, if a shade of doubt or apprehension had crossed Sir Harry's mind, which it did not, the beaming satisfaction which lighted up her face the moment she saw him, would have dispelled it at once.

“ Oh, I am so glad to see you, Sir Harry,” she cried, “ I was coming to seek you after I had been here—I have much to tell you ; and if you will wait one moment, I will be down directly.”

“ But where are you going to, my dear child ?” asked the old Knight ; “ are you aware that this is not the most reputable part of London ?”

“ I did not know it,” answered the girl simply, “ but at all events I must go ; for it is about our dear lady's business, and I am to see a person called Grey.”

“ I am going to visit the same man,” replied Sir Harry, “ so I will go with you, if you have not any private conversation for his ear, my fair Ida.”

“ Oh, no,” exclaimed the girl ; “ you may hear it all ; for I have just the same tidings to carry to you ; and perhaps it may be better that you should hear them, together, for then you may

devise some means of remedying the new disasters which have befallen us."

"Stay a minute, Ida," said Sir Harry, seeing her about to mount the stairs; "do you know the man you are about to visit? Do you really know who he is?"

"He has carried several letters," replied Ida Mara, dropping her voice, "from my lady to her husband, and from him to her. I know, too," she added in a still lower tone, "that his name is not Grey."

"That is enough, that is enough," said Sir Harry; "go on, my dear."

The girl then ascended the steps, and knocked at a door on the first landing. Markham instantly opened it himself and admitted them,—somewhat surprised indeed to see Sir Harry with the fair Italian,—into a small, low-roofed chamber, scantily furnished, but strewn in all parts with various anomalous pieces of dress, from those of a high-bred cavalier to those of an inferior artisan. Swords, daggers, one or two curious articles of *virtù*, ten or fifteen volumes of books in rich old bindings, two masks, a pair

of fencing foils, and the head-piece and breast-plate of a horse-arquebusier, gave it the air of a second-hand warehouse, and left scarcely a chair vacant for the knight and his beautiful companion to rest themselves upon.

“I am glad you are come,” cried Markham, addressing Ida Mara, after a few words exchanged with Sir Harry West; “they have straitened Mr. Seymour’s captivity; and I fear something has gone wrong at your house, too. What is your news, sweet Mistress Ida?—Bad, I fear!”

“As bad as it can be,” answered Ida Mara; “they have discovered that letters are given and received; an angry message has been sent by the King to my lady; and to-morrow morning she is to be removed to Highgate, to the house of one Mr. Conyers, there to remain till a lodging is prepared for her at a place called Durham.”

“Durham!” exclaimed Markham; “that is destruction indeed. She must not go to Durham, if we can prevent it, Sir Harry.”

“How is that to be done?” demanded Sir Harry West.

“Faith, if need be,” replied Markham, “she must feign illness.”

“There is no need of feigning,” answered Ida Mara, in a sad tone; “for, from the moment she heard that news, she drooped her head like a gathered flower, and if they bear her to Highgate, it will be all that they can do.”

“Give me three days, and I will undertake for her escape,” exclaimed Markham. “I am wiser now than I was some years ago, Sir Harry; and know how to make use of my time. Will you aid me, noble sir?”

“With my heart, hand, and means,” said Sir Harry West; “for this cruel tyranny of the King, towards so sweet and unoffending a lady, justifies what would be otherwise unjustifiable, to thwart him. What is to be done, my good friend?”

“Much,” answered Markham, “very much; and we must divide the labour. I dare not show myself amongst the great of the land; so you, Sir Harry, must see Lord Beauchamp, and the Earls of Hertford and Shrewsbury; they must

furnish us with men, horses, and money. Let them collect as many servants and beasts as they can round about Highgate, suffering no three of the knaves to know where the others are, but with orders to obey you or me implicitly. I will provide the ship, and the disguises; and if we can but delay her journey till such a time as suspicion and vigilance be somewhat laid asleep, we are all safe. Tell me, Mistress Ida, is there any man about the lady who may be trusted? How many servants has she allowed her?"

"Three men," replied Ida; "but the only one to be trusted is Cobham, who has been with her long. He is prudent, and would sacrifice his life for her, I am sure."

"Then you must let him into our secret," said Markham; "first speaking with the lady, and asking her consent. You must tell her, too, to be prepared at any moment to put our scheme in execution; let nothing take her by surprise; and, above all, give her some hint that it may be needful she should put on man's attire. If I know her rightly, that will be the greatest stumbling-block."

“It will not please her,” answered Ida Mara; “but still, for her own sake, and her husband’s, I am sure she will consent.”

“Were it not better,” asked Sir Harry, “that the one escaped first, and the other followed?”

“No, no,” replied Markham; “I have thought of that; but I am very sure, that the duration of the other would be rendered ten times as severe, the moment one was gone. Let them both go together, Sir Harry, then there is but one risk for all.”

“But there is a difficulty,” said Sir Harry West, “which you have not foreseen, good sir. Mr. Seymour has pledged himself not to go beyond —”

“That is at an end,” exclaimed Markham; “they have taken from him the limits they allowed; and, consequently, he is freed from his promise. He is willing enough now to escape, and, moreover, feels sure of effecting it with little, if any, need of help: we shall but have to let him know where the ship lies, and he will undertake the rest. I will see you to-morrow at Highgate, lady fair, and tell you more when

all is arranged. Now, hie you home ; for it is growing dark, and you are too pretty a flower to bear the night air."

" I will go with you, Ida," said the old knight.

" I have one of the men with me," answered Ida Mara ; " and have but to go down to the water-side. Have I anything else to tell the lady ?"

" Nothing, at present," replied Markham ; " to-morrow I will visit you, as I have said, in some shape or other ; and if you should have occasion to write, let it be in your native tongue, I shall understand you. We will see you safe, till you have rejoined your companion. Go on, and we will follow."

Thus saying, he opened the door of his room ; and Ida Mara descending the stairs, with a quick pace, walked on to the spot where Arabella's servant stood near the shop at which she had left him ; Sir Harry West and Markham keeping at the distance of a step or two behind. The old knight, however, was not satisfied even, when he saw her under the protection of a single at-

tendant; and still accompanied by Markham, continued to follow her.

At the end of the second street, he had occasion to be glad that he did so, for by the small portion of light that was remaining, he saw a very extravagantly dressed personage, with black hair and beard, take hold of Ida Mara by the arm, while a stout man, who was with him, thrust himself in between her and her attendant, seemingly inclined to pick a quarrel with the latter.

“Ah! my dear; have I found you at last!” cried the man with the black beard.

“What, in Satan’s name, are you running over me for?” said his companion, taking Arabella’s servant by the throat.

“I will soon show you,” answered the man, drawing his sword; while Ida Mara struggled to disengage herself from the grasp of the other, who only laughed, and exclaimed, “Ah! you cannot get away now!”

But just at that moment, Markham ran up to take part with Arabella’s servant, and Sir Harry West, who was still a powerful man for his time of life, seized the fellow by the collar, who had

got hold of his fair protégée, and by one pull, with a kick against the bend of the knees behind, laid him upon his back on the pavement. The man hallooed piteously; but the knight merely spurned him with his foot, saying, "Get up, impostor, and be gone. I know thee."

It is probable that the old knight would not have suffered him to escape without further chastisement, had he not been afraid of bringing a crowd about the party, which might have proved inconvenient; and worthy Doctor Foreman, for he it was who had been thus overthrown, scrambled upon his feet again, showing but little inclination to bluster.

"Come away, come away," he cried, to the man who was with him, and then took two or three steps towards the corner of another street. Before he reached it, however, he turned, and exclaimed, with a significant gesture of the hand, "I will have my day!"

"To be hanged," replied Sir Harry West; and, seeing that the other man was beating his retreat also, the old knight took Ida Mara by the arm, saying, "Come, my dear, I will see you

safe to the boat." He accordingly led her on to the water-side, and did not leave her till she was safely embarked upon the Thames. Sir Harry then returned with Markham to his lodging, more completely to define their plan of operations, and to commence the carrying of them into effect at once.

In the meanwhile Ida Mara returned to the house of Sir Thomas Parry, from which her absence had passed unobserved, and bore with her some hope of consolation to poor Arabella, who had given herself up to despair at the prospect of being removed to such a distance from her husband. She still remained so ill and weak, however, that the worthy knight who held her in his custody, judged it expedient to intimate to the King that it would be dangerous to force a long journey upon her in her situation at the time.

The reply of the King was as cold and unfeeling as might be. He believed she was feigning, he said; but that, at all events, she must be removed to Highgate, where his physician should visit her.

Accordingly, on the following morning, she was

placed in a litter, and carried to a house pleasantly situated at a short distance from the village, where she was received with much kindness by the master and mistress of the mansion. Two of the King's physicians were already in waiting, and Mr. Conyers, into whose charge she was now given, in energetic language, pointed out to them the absolute necessity of allowing the lady time to recover, before it was attempted to remove her farther.

“If you suffer her, gentlemen,” he said, “to undertake a journey in her present state, and before she has completely regained her health, her death be upon your heads; for you must see that she is totally incapable of supporting it.”

The physicians agreed to the justice of his remarks, and drew up their report accordingly; assuring her, that she should be suffered to remain for a week, at least, where she then was. As soon as they were gone, Arabella thanked her host gently and sweetly, for the kindness he had shown her.

“Nay, dear lady,” he answered, kissing her hand; “I and my good wife are interested in

the matter, for we shall thus retain you longer with us ; and we propose to ourselves the pleasure of comforting and soothing you, which we do not estimate as a slight grace. For a few days, perhaps, we shall be obliged to have the appearance of strict gaolers ; but, as we are not such by nature, we shall, I doubt not, obtain permission to relax, especially if you would, when visited by any of the King's officers, assume the appearance of being somewhat reconciled to your situation and submissive to the will of the King."

The brutal and ungentlemanly reply of James, when the physicians made their report, is well known ; but they adhered honestly to their remonstrance against any attempt to move the lady to Durham for some time ; and when, on the following day, one of them visited her, he brought her the glad tidings, that she was to remain at Highgate for a month.

We must notice, however, before we proceed, an event which took place on the day of Arabella's arrival at the house of Mr. Conyers.

After the hint which had been given by Mark-

ham, it may easily be supposed Ida Mara was frequently on the watch during the day for his promised visit ; but the situation of the mansion, which was one surrounded on all sides by extensive grounds enclosed within high brick walls, rendered any communication with those without extremely difficult. At length, however, towards evening, she perceived from the window of her mistress's chamber, a man bearing a bundle on his shoulder. He was apparently a porter, and seemed considerably advanced in life, walking with slow steps and bending under his load. When half way along the gravel walk, which ran from the gates to the house, he paused, laid down the packet, and wiped his brow.

“ Lady, lady !” cried Ida Mara, addressing her mistress, who was lying down to take some repose, “ here is somebody coming whom I think I know—I will run down and meet him.”

“ Be careful, be careful, Ida !” said Arabella ; “ if they were to discover you, and drive you from me, what should I do ? ”

“ Something must be risked, dear lady,” an-

swered her attendant. "I am sure that is our friend." And away she went, with a light step, down the stairs and out by a side door. Knowing that she might be seen from the windows, she walked slowly and deliberately along the path till she reached the spot where Markham stood with his bundle.

"What news?" she said, pausing beside him.

"All is going on right," he replied; "a ship is hired and will be ready in a few days. 'Tis a French vessel taking in a cargo, and may be known by the flag. It will be at Leigh; but, in the meantime, let the lady know that friends, with horses ready for her service, are always to be found at a small inn, called the Rose, on the road from this place to Newington."

"What have you got there?" asked Ida Mara.

"Some woman's apparel at the top," answered Markham, "sent by the Countess of Hertford; but, underneath, there is a disguise for the lady, in case of need."

“Will they not open it at the house?” inquired Ida.

“No, no!” replied Markham; “the man’s dress is so folded up that they cannot see it, without cutting open the cloth it is wrapped in. But here comes somebody from the house; have you any tidings to give me?”

“Not as yet,” rejoined the pretty Italian in haste; “when I have, I will send it to the Rose.”

“That will do, that will do,” replied Markham. “Now, remember, I have asked you if the Lady Arabella is here, that I have come with these things from Sir Thomas Parry’s, where they have been left by mistake. You may pay me something for my labour if you will, for I am to be a porter, you know.”

“How much do you charge?” asked Ida Mara, with a smile, taking out her purse.

“Not less than a half-crown, Madam,” answered her companion, as Mr. Conyers approached; “remember, it is a long way.”

“Oh, that is too much,” said Ida, “for car-

rying such a package as this. It is very light ;” and she lifted it with her hand.

“ Not so light to bring seven miles, mistress,” rejoined Markham, acting his part with skill acquired by long practise. “ Ask this gentleman, if I charge too much.”

“ What is the matter ?” demanded Mr. Conyers, coming up.

“ He asks half-a-crown, sir,” said Ida Mara, turning round, “ for carrying this parcel hither from Lambeth, where it was forgotten this morning.”

“ You had better give it him,” replied Mr. Conyers, smiling ; “ it is a long way.”

The fair Italian put the half-crown into Markham’s hand, saying, “ Well, take it up to the house, then. I will come after you, and carry it up to the lady’s room.”

“ Stay a moment,” said Mr. Conyers, as she was about to follow the seeming porter, who took up the package and walked on ; “ a word with you, pretty one. Remember, when you wish to speak with any of your friends, it must be out-

side the wall. I have no orders to keep you within, but nobody, except persons to myself, must for the future pass the gates."

His tone, though not unkind, was grave and significant; and Ida Mara, thinking it better to make no reply, merely bowed her head and withdrew, following her confederate quickly, and taking his burden from him at the door.

She watched him as he returned towards the gates to which the master of the mansion had bent his steps after leaving her, and from which he was now coming back. Mr. Conyers, however, passed the pretended porter without stopping, and Ida Mara hurried with the packet up to her mistress's chamber. As soon as she was there she opened it, and from the bottom drew forth a bundle sewed up in a linen cloth, which she instantly deposited in a closet and locked the door.

"What have you there, Ida?" asked Arabella.

"A disguise for you, dear lady," replied the faithful girl in a whisper, approaching close to her mistress's bedside. "I know not what it is, but we will not open it to-night."

She had scarcely done speaking, when an elderly woman, an attendant of Mrs. Conyers, tapped at the door and entered, asking if she could be of any assistance.

“Yes, Mrs. Maude,” replied Ida; “if you will help me to lay out these things, which seem to have been somewhat tumbled in coming, I will thank you;” and, aided by the maid, she took all the articles of apparel sent by Lady Hertford out of the package, one by one, spreading them forth with great care, though Arabella, who had never employed her in any menial capacity since her act of devotion in nursing Sir Harry West through the plague, told her it would be better for her to send for the maid Helen to perform that office.

The servant of Mrs. Conyers, however, was for the time completely deceived, and on retiring, informed her mistress, who had sent her to the lady’s chamber, that there was nothing in the package which she had seen brought to the house but ordinary clothing.

Good Mrs. Conyers was not a harsh or unkind personage, but she was one who possessed few

very gentle feelings ; and those that she did possess, were so well sheltered by a considerable share of selfishness, that it was somewhat difficult to get at them. She was of a prying disposition, too ; but it fortunately happened that, as is frequently the case with persons of her character, the mind was as obtuse as the feelings ; and with every inclination to act the gaoler and the spy upon the fair prisoner, she had not the wit to execute the task effectually.

CHAPTER VI.

“ALL as we could wish, all as we could wish !” cried Rochester, entering a room in Northampton House, in which the Countess of Essex sat with her mother, Lady Suffolk. “We have the great majority of the judges, delegates. In a few days the decree of nullity will be pronounced ; and we need not care a pin for that rank Puritan, Abbot, or the Bishop of London. They are the only two who hold out, for Ely and Coventry have yielded to the King’s arguments.”

Lady Essex cast herself into his arms, with her face radiant with joy ; and the shameless Countess of Suffolk rose and congratulated the lover of her criminal daughter, with as many expressions of satisfaction, as if he were about to raise her to a station of honour and fame.

“Get them to sign the decree quickly, Rochester,” she said ; “Abbot is a powerful man,

and the see of Canterbury has no light authority. He may bring some of the rest over again; and it is as well to have as many on our side as possible."

"There is no fear, there is no fear," replied Rochester. "They have pledged themselves to the King, and cannot go back. Nevertheless, be you assured, dear lady, I will lose no time. What I most fear is, from that villain Overbury. He has written me this day a most insolent and threatening letter; and he may make mischief."

"I wonder," said Lady Suffolk in a jesting tone, "if there be no butts of Malmsey now in that same Tower of London? But come, I will go and tell Northampton of your good news. He is as eager in the business as any of us."

"Not as I am," answered Rochester, casting himself into a seat by the side of his paramour. "There I defy him."

"But what says your dear good friend, Sir Thomas Overbury?" asked Lady Essex. "My mother is right, Rochester: we want Malmsey butt!"

"It were not safe," answered her lover, look-

ing down; "the man may drive me to punish him as he deserves; but how, is the question."

"Oh, by a thousand means," answered the Countess. "But what does he say, what does he say, Robert? let me see. Have you got the letter with you?"

"Yes, here it is," answered Rochester; "a sweet composition, in truth, and one which shows that he and I are henceforth sworn enemies. One or the other must perish, that is clear."

"Let it be him, sweet Rochester, let it be him," said the Countess, taking the letter, and running her eye over the contents.

"What says the villain?" she exclaimed at length, with her face burning as she read aloud some portions of Overbury's letter. "—' You and I will come to public trial before all the friends I have?—They shall know what words have passed betwixt us heretofore?—I have wrote the story betwixt you and me from the first hour to this day!'—Rochester, there is no time to be lost! He brings it on his own head.—Let him take the consequences."

"But how? but how?" cried Rochester.

“How?” asked the Countess. “Is he not in the Tower?—Is not my father Lord High Chamberlain?—Are you not a Privy Counsellor?—Will the King refuse you anything you ask in reason?—Rochester, Rochester! means are not difficult if you will be firm. But place a secure man as Lieutenant of the Tower, and leave the rest to me. What! would you have yourself overthrown by a worm—by a viper?—Will you leave a snake to sting you, when by one stroke of your heel you can tread it into nothing? You have done all you have done, more than could be expected, to avoid the necessity he forces on you. You offered him rank, station, and high employment! He refused them all, and his own obstinacy sent him to the Tower. Now he would charge and calumniate you, knowing right well, that slander always leaves part of its venom behind, whatever antidote we apply. He gives you no choice, he forces you to declare that he or you must perish.”

“It is but too true,” replied Rochester, gazing on the ground somewhat gloomily, “and yet

I would to Heaven he did not force me to deal with him harshly."

"Ay, but he does," exclaimed the Countess. "Tell me, if two men are in a sinking boat that will but bear one, has not the strongest every right to cast the other into the sea and save himself?"

She paused for an answer, and her lover replied, "I think he has; but still he may regret to do it."

"True," said Lady Essex, "true; and so do I, and so do you. But if that man were an enemy who had brought him there only to take his life? He who weakly stands in fear of a man he can destroy, deserves the fate that he spares the other. Had he been content to bear, even for some short time, with meekness and forbearance the punishment he has called down on his own head, he might have lived on in peace for aught you would have said or I have done against him. But now, Rochester," she added, laying her fair and beautiful hand upon his arm, and speaking in a low but emphatic tone, "but now,

he must die ! Do you mark me ?—He must die ! It is not hate that makes me speak ; we could have afforded to hate him, and yet let him live. I practise nought against the life of Essex, though Heaven knows I have hated him enough. But to dread is different, to live in continual fear of what a fellow being may say, to know that our secrets are at the mercy of an enemy, to see him strive to curb us at his will, like a groom upon a managed horse, because he has got the bridle of fear between our jaws, is not an existence to be tolerated for an hour. Fling me, I say, such a rider to the dust and break his neck, or you are not half a man. This letter, this base and insolent letter, is his death-warrant !” And she struck it with the back of her fingers, with all the passion and vehemence of her nature. “ He has signed it with his own hand,” she added. “ It is his own deed ! and as he has planted the tree, so let him eat the fruit.”

“ But the means ! but the means !” cried Rochester. “ Where shall we find the means ?—Remember, such deeds leave marks behind them, that may condemn us. Cold judges will not

weigh the provocation, but only the act; will not think of how he drove us to destroy him, but punish us for his destruction. The King himself will suffer no private revenge; remember the case of Sanquhar, where no prayers or entreaties would move him."

"Ay, but remember, also," said the Countess, "that he was hated, you are loved. James smiled when he signed Sanquhar's warrant. Know you not why he looked so pleased? Was not Sanquhar a friend of that famous King of France who so eclipsed the pale light of the Scottish Star, that he looked like Orion beside one of the little twinkling Pleiades? Did not Sanquhar stand by unmoved, by aught but laughter, when Henry vented a keen jest upon the birth of this British Solomon, and James paid him well. Him he detested; you he adores.—Who does not, that knows you, Rochester?—And if this be so managed that no mighty hubbub is made about it, I will undertake the King shall aid you to conceal it, rather than punish you for an act most necessary. Besides, if I judge right, there may be things within the

scope of your knowledge that this great monarch would not have told. I counsel you not to make him dread you ; for that is too perilous. Show him all devotion, and there is no fear of his becoming an enemy to one who is so much his friend. Then, as for the rest, lend me your power and I will give you the means. I will away, with all speed, to a certain serviceable woman whom I know, who will afford me good counsel as to what is to be done. But I must put off this gay apparel ; and if you will be here to supper, I will have news for you. Hark ! I hear my mother coming, with my good Lord Northampton. He shall lend me his barge ; and I will away.”

“ Let me go with you,” said Rochester.

“ What, in these fine feathers ?” cried the Countess, laughing as lightly as if her errand were but some pleasant scheme of momentary diversion. “ No, no, most noble Lord, that would betray all. Another time you shall. Fair sir,” she continued, turning to the Earl of Northampton as he entered, “ I beseech you, as your poor kinswoman and dependant, to lend me your

lordship's barge for a short time. I have a secret expedition to the city, to visit a certain goldsmith, who must not know me, lest he charge his workmanship too dear. You will not deny me?"

She spoke in a gay and mocking tone, calculated to discover rather than to conceal the fact that she had some more important scheme to execute than that which she gave out; and the Earl of Northampton replied at once: "It, as all else that I possess, fair lady, is at your devotion. Stay; I must order it."

"Nay, nay," said the Countess, "I will do so as I pass through the anteroom. Show him the letter, Rochester, and ask him simply what that man deserves who wrote it."

Thus saying, she left the room, and Rochester placed the letter of Sir Thomas Overbury in the hands of the Lord Northampton, who had by this time become his chief friend and adviser at the Court. The Earl read it twice, and then returning it, said, in a marked tone, "Death!—A man," he added, "who can betray the secrets confided to him, is the worst sort of traitor; but

he who can use them to intimidate another, is lower than the common cutpurse upon the highway. Were this man out of prison, I should say, call him into some quiet corner of the Park, and draw your sword. As it is, I cannot so well advise you."

The Countess of Suffolk made Rochester a sign not to continue the subject; and in a few minutes more, Lady Essex re-appeared masked, and habited with great simplicity.

"Now," she exclaimed, addressing Rochester, "you may have the honour of handing me to the barge, or, if you like it better, may accompany me till I land near the bridge, and wait for me, like a humble slave, till I re-embark; for I will have no pert lover prying into where I go."

Thus saying, she gave him her hand, and the Earl of Northampton, smiling as benignly on their criminal attachment as the Countess of Suffolk had done, conducted them to a door leading into the gardens, where he left them to pursue their way to the private stairs, which were then attached

to all the great houses that lined the bank of the Thames from Whitehall to the City

Rochester and the Countess proceeded through the gardens, toying and jesting as they went, and then seated themselves in the barge, which speedily bore them down nearly to London Bridge. There the lady left her lover, and, followed by two men, entered upon the narrow streets of the metropolis, which she threaded till she reached the well-known house of Mrs. Turner. She paused in the little court, and sent up one of the men to see if the respectable lady she came to visit, was at home and alone.

“ Say, a lady wishes to see her,” said the Countess. “ Mind, sirrah, give no names—merely a lady.”

“ I know, my lady,” replied the man, who had accompanied his mistress more than once upon a similar errand; and entering the door, which stood open, he soon came back with tidings that good Mrs. Turner was within, and disengaged.

“ Bless me, my lady !” exclaimed Mrs. Tur-

ner, as soon as she saw the Countess, " I have not had the honour of a visit for I don't how long ; but I see that all has gone well with you. You could not look so fresh and so beautiful if you were not happy ; though beautiful enough you were always, even when you were in the state of misery, from which I had some little share in relieving you."

" Thanks, thanks, Mrs. Turner," replied the Countess, " the relief is not quite complete ; but I think it will be soon. However, I have another business on hand, perhaps more important still. See that there is no one in that room, and lock the door."

" Oh, there is no one, I am sure, my lady," said Mrs. Turner. " I take good care against eaves-droppers ; but you shall see." And opening the door which led to an inner chamber, she displayed a bed-room fitted up in a style of luxury which would have shamed a palace.

She then locked a door which led from it to a back stair-case ; and tripping back on the tips of her toes, she sat down opposite to Lady Essex, saying, " Now, sweet lady, you see there is

no one there ; and, if there be anything in all the world that I can do to serve you, I am ready. I am sure, it is quite a pleasure to do any thing for so great and generous a person."

"That is all nonsense, Turner," replied the Countess ; "what I have to do now, cannot be a pleasure to any one concerned ; but it is forced upon me. — Tell me, you who have such skilful means of gratifying hearts that love, have you not means of satisfying hate as well ?"

"Really, my lady, I don't know what you mean," said Mrs. Turner. "You must speak clearly ; and I will give you a clear answer."

"Pshaw," cried the Countess impatiently ; "half of your trade, woman, is to understand at a mere hint.—Tell me, if you had an enemy, one that you dreaded, one that rendered it necessary for your safety that he should be removed, could you not find means—without much apparent dealing with him—to free yourself from your danger, and from his enmity ?"

Mrs. Turner gazed silently in her face, for a moment, and then, in a voice sunk to a whisper, asked, "Is it my lord, your husband ?"

“He!” cried the Countess with a scoff. “But I have no husband,” she added the moment after; “if you mean the Earl of Essex, poor creature, my hate ceased as soon as he ceased to trouble me. The idle bond between us will be soon snapped by the fingers of the law; and henceforward I care no more about him than about any of the thousands who walk the streets of London, and whom I have never seen. No, no, it is another, a much less person; for you might fear to put your fingers in the Peerage.— But answer me my question. Were such your case, could you not find means, I say?”

“Perhaps I could, my lady,” answered Mrs. Turner in a grave tone. “Perhaps I could.”

“Then you must make my hatred yours,” replied the Countess, “and work against my enemies as if they were your own.”

“That I will, madam, I am sure, with all my heart,” answered her worthy confederate. “But I must have help, my lady.”

“You shall have such assistance as shall render all easy,” replied the Countess.

“Ay,” rejoined Mrs. Turner; “but what I

mean is, I cannot undertake this thing alone. Good Doctor Foreman, must give us assistance. —I doubt you would not like blood shed?”

“No, no, no!” answered the Countess; “there must be no blood; nothing to leave a trace of how the person died. Quietly and secretly, and yet as speedily as may be.”

“It will be difficult, madam,” said Mrs. Turner; “a very difficult thing indeed; for though one may get at their food so as to spice one dish to their taste for ever, yet if it is to be slow poison —”

The Countess started, and her warm cheek turned somewhat pale. “Is your ladyship ill?” asked Mrs. Turner.

“No, no!” answered the Countess, “’twas the word poison. — Often,” she added slowly and thoughtfully, “we must make use of means we like not to hear named, and the heart shrinks at a word that is most bold in action. But it matters not; — poison — ay, poison! — So let it be! — Why should the sound scare me? — Poison. — Well, woman, what was it thou wert saying?”

“Why, please you, my lady; that if slow

poison is to be used, we must bribe some man who has constant access to the person, for it must be given daily."

"None shall have access but yourself and those you send," replied the Countess. "All food may pass through your hands — and yet I wish this were not to be done. — Would that it could be accomplished boldly and openly, without such silent, secret dealings : but that is impossible in this case."

"Oh dear, my lady !" replied Mrs. Turner in a soothing tone. "You need not distress yourself about it. You do not know how frequently such things happen."

"Ay ? Is it often done ?" exclaimed the Countess.

"Daily, madam," said Mrs. Turner. "Many a rich old miser finds the way to Heaven, by the tender love his heir bears to his money bags ; many a jealous husband troubles his lady's peace no more, after she has learnt the secret of deliverance ; many a wise man's secrets find a quiet deposit in the church-yard, which otherwise might have been noised abroad ; many a poor girl, be-

trayed and wearied of, finds peace, by the same hand that took it from her.—But that's a shame, I say, and such means should be only used against the strong and the dangerous."

The Countess smiled bitterly. "Yes!" she said, looking down, "there are gradations even in such things as these; and dire necessity still justifies the act that else were criminal.—And so 'tis often done, good Mrs. Turner? I have heard of it, but knew not it was frequent."

"Oh yes, my lady," answered the fiend, "scarce a day—I am sure not a week passes, without a stone being put up by mourning friends in memory of those whom they would fain forget; and, once the earth is shovelled in, you know, it matters little how the dead man went. In truth, to most men. 'Tis a charity to cut them off from a few years of sorrow. 'Tis a sad world, full of cares, my lady; and I know that too, poor creature as I am.—Here they are pressing me hard for the rent of my house; and where I am to get it I am sure I cannot tell."

"There!" said the Countess, throwing a purse upon the table, "and if you skilfully ac-

complish that which is needed, you shall be rich."

The woman seized her hand to kiss it ; but the Countess drew it away, as if a serpent stung her. " Come, no foolery," she said. " You know I pay well for services ; but they must be rendered duly. I have told you, that this person shall be entirely in your power. You shall have every opportunity to practise on him your skill. He shall be altogether in your hands. Is there anything more you need ?"

" Ha, ha, ha ! " said Mrs. Turner, laughing with a low titter. " I thought first it was a woman, till your ladyship said, *he* ; for ladies have not, in general, such enmities to men."

" My friendships are the friendships of my friends," cried the Countess, " their hate my hate." 'Tis not that this man has injured me, but he is dangerous to one I love. He must die ! See you to the means. I have heard that the late Queen Catherine, of France, was so well served in cases such as these, that those whom she dreaded or disliked, disappeared as if by magic. The smelling of a nosegay ; a pair of scented gloves ;

a cup of fragrant wine, would clear her Court in a few hours of those who cumbered it."

"All tales ! my lady," replied Mrs. Turner, "except, perhaps, the wine. I doubt not that she did deliver herself of enemies by such means, and those the best, too, she could employ ; but odours to kill, must be strong scents indeed ; and, 'tis more like, some friendly valet helped to season the soup of the good Monseigneur, than that he took the poison by the nose. However, there is one thing I can say, that there is no secret in the sciences, with which my friend, good Doctor Foreman, is unfurnished ; and, moreover, that he will employ them all, to please your ladyship."

"Well, consult him, then," said Lady Essex ; "let him know that his reward is sure. Think you he has ever practised in this sort before ?"

"I must not say that, my lady," replied Mrs. Turner, with a shrewd look ; "but I know well, that in this country, and in many others, too, he has served great men in various ways.—Ay, kings, and princes ; and, I suspect, their foes have had cause to know it, too. But he is as

secret as the grave, and never babbles of the things he has done."

"That is the man we want," said the Countess; "speak to him about the matter, and let me know what he says."

"That I will, my lady," answered Mrs. Turner. "But who is the gentleman we have to deal with?"

"You shall know hereafter," replied Lady Essex; "what I have said, is sufficient for the present."

"Nay; but dear lady," urged her infamous confederate, "I fear Doctor Foreman may not like to engage in the matter without knowing who the person is. I have no curiosity, for my part."

"Why should he hesitate?" demanded the Countess sharply; "one man must, to him, be the same as another, if what you have said of him be true. The butcher asks not where the ox he slays was bred or fattened, what green meadows fed it, from what streams it drank. The blow that ends it is all he has to think of; and so let it be here."

"I doubt that will not satisfy him, my lady,"

said Mrs. Turner ; “ there are some great men he might not like to deal with—any of his kind friends, and patrons, would give him pain to injure. Perhaps this very gentleman may have been favourable to him—may have employed him in things of the same kind.”

“ ’Tis not unlikely,” answered the Countess, with a gloomy smile ; “ but, if he have, he will employ him no farther. The walls of a prison are round him, from which he will ne’er pass out alive. However, as your friend cannot penetrate into the Tower, to tell the secret to him who must die ; and as he dare not, I think, betray it to any other, the man is Sir Thomas Overbury ;” and she fixed her beautiful eyes steadfastly upon the countenance of Mrs. Turner, as if to read the effect which her words produced upon the woman’s mind.

It was not such as she expected ; for the passion in her own heart gave even her victim higher importance than he had possessed in the eyes of others. “ What ! Sir Thomas Overbury ?” exclaimed Mrs. Turner, in some surprise ; “ the friend of my Lord of Rochester ? ”

“He *was* his friend,” replied the Countess, with marked emphasis; “but now—”

She left the sentence unconcluded, and Mrs. Turner exclaimed, “Ah! I see how it is; I understand it all, now! Such friends may become dangerous, lady. He may have secrets of my Lord of Rochester’s, which must not be betrayed; perhaps, some of the King’s, too.”

“Perhaps so,” answered the Countess; “all we know, however, is, that he lies a close prisoner in the Tower, by the King’s own order; that no man,—except such as have licence from his Majesty himself—is permitted to speak with him, on pain of high displeasure; and, that it were better for all parties that such things were brought to an end. See to it, good Mrs. Turner, see to it! and come up to me at Northampton House, to night at supper time. The Earl will then be in the country; and you will find Lord Rochester and myself alone. If you have seen this Doctor Foreman then, you may bring him with you; and so, farewell!”

Thus saying, the Countess left her, hurried to the barge, and seating herself by her

lover's side, was rowed back to Northampton House. But as she went, she vainly endeavoured to assume the light gaiety which she had displayed as they came; for the terrible conversation which she had just held with her instrument, still cast its shadow upon her. While the act was merely a matter of vague contemplation, she had felt it but little; but, as with those who approach to climb a mountain, which at a distance looked soft and easy of ascent, she found the task more fearful than she had anticipated when she came to deal with the details. Even her bold and resolute spirit felt oppressed with the first steps to the terrible crime that was to be committed; the very lowness and pettiness of the means to be employed had something strangely horrible to her imagination which she could not shake off. She sat silent and gloomy then as the boat glided over the water; and Rochester easily divined that preparations were already made for the dark act they meditated.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE wing of the old palace in the Tower, which has long since been swept away, was, at this time, when the King's general residence was at Whitehall, given up to those prisoners of state, who were not committed to that close custody which debarred them from a general communication from their fellow men. This was the habitation of William Seymour, about a week after the period when the Lady Arabella was conveyed from Lambeth to Highgate. He had, in the first instance, been placed in the Beauchamp tower, but had been removed to make way for Sir Thomas Overbury; and he now had larger apartments and better accommodation than before, as well as the range of the whole extent of the Tower itself, though the liberty of passing the gates, which he had at one time enjoyed, was denied him.

From time to time he received the visits of various friends; and Markham was with him every day, bearing him tidings or short notes from his beloved wife, though their correspondence could not be so full as during the period of her confinement at the house of Sir Thomas Parry.

The intervals of solitude to which he was subjected during various parts of the day, were passed in writing, reading, and meditating schemes of escape; and often, in deep reflection, he paced the old halls and corridors of the palace, pausing from time to time—as the sunshine penetrated through the tall windows, and fell upon mementos of men and ages gone—to read the homily it afforded, of the transitory nature of all human things.

He was one day standing thus employed, gazing at a spot on the wall where some hand had carved the name of Edward Plantagenet, and wondering to which of all the many distinguished persons who had borne that appellation, the inscription referred, when a gentleman whom he well knew, named Sir Robert Killigrew, approached with the

sauntering and meditative step of a prisoner, and gave him the good morning.

“I was coming to seek you, sir,” said Killigrew, “to pay you my respects as your fellow captive, which I have been since last night.”

“May I ask on what cause, Sir Robert?” demanded Seymour.

“You would be long in divining,” answered the knight.

“That I may well be,” replied Seymour; “for as things now go on in England, there is not an act in all the wide range of those which man can perform, that may not, by the elastic stretching of the law, the cunning of the bad, and the indifference of all the rest, be construed into some crime worthy of imprisonment.”

“It is but too true,” replied Killigrew. “My crime was but speaking a few words with poor Sir Thomas Overbury, who called to me when I passed his window, as I was returning from a visit to my poor friend Raleigh. For this mighty misdemeanour I was committed from the council-table, and here I am, your servant at com-

mand,* so far as services may be rendered within the walls of the Tower."

"I must not welcome you, Sir Robert," replied Seymour, "for it were no friendly act to see you gladly here. What news were stirring when you left the Court?"

"Good faith, but little," answered the knight, "except that Rochester exceeds all bounds in favour, impudence, rapacity, and rashness. The functions of all offices of the state are now monopolized by him; there's not a privy-councillor can wag his beard, unless my Lord of Rochester give leave; and if a suitor have ever so just a claim, good faith his gold must flow into the favourite's purse, before he can obtain a hearing. He rules the Court and the State, and where it not for Abbot, would rule the church too, I believe. But the archbishop frowns upon him, and holds out against the nullity of his fair Countess's marriage with Lord Essex."

* Let it be remembered that this act of intolerable tyranny was actually committed: and this, with the rest of James's conduct towards Overbury, led men reasonably to suspect that the prisoner was in possession of some horrible secret affecting the King himself.

“What does he do for want of Overbury?” asked Seymour. “Good faith, when I heard that the knight was arrested, I fancied that the favourite’s day was at an end.”

“Heaven and the King forgive you,” cried Killigrew. “Why it was Rochester himself did it. That is known to all the world now-a-days ; and as to how he does without him, he pins himself upon my Lord Northampton, that learned piece of Popish craft. He is with him daily, hourly, and by his advice rules all his actions, as he did by Overbury’s.”

“Poor Overbury !” said Seymour, “I have no cause to love him ; but yet I cannot help pitying a man cast down by that bitterest stroke of adversity, the falsehood and ingratitude of a friend.”

“I pity him, too,” replied Killigrew, “which was the cause why I stayed to speak to him. I know not what he has done to injure or offend you, sir, that you say you have no cause to love him, but he seems most anxious to see you, which indeed, I was coming to tell you. Though I cannot advise you to give way to his request, for by

so doing perhaps you may injure yourself with the Lieutenant of the Tower, who it seems already dreads he shall be dismissed for the short conversation I had with his prisoner."

"Oh, Wade is a good friend of mine," answered Seymour, "and is under some obligations to my house. What did Sir Thomas say?"

"As near as I can recollect," replied Sir Robert Killigrew, "that it would be a great consolation to him if he could speak with you or the Lady Arabella. But take care what you do; for I cannot but think that it is rash to make the attempt. The King's orders are most strict, that no one, not his nearest friends, not his own father, should have a moment's interview with him."

"I will see him, nevertheless, if it be possible," answered Seymour. "The man who could refuse consolation, however small, to a poor captive shut out from human intercourse, must have a cold heart indeed, let the risk be what it may. I am sure you do not regret your captivity for such a cause, Sir Robert."

"I regret my captivity, whatever be the rea-

son," replied the knight; "but yet I would do the same to-morrow, I confess."

"Well, I will go watch my opportunity," replied Seymour; "no one can tell what changes may be made; but if they remove him to the Bell Tower, beneath the lantern, or to one of the dungeons, the occasion will be missed."

"Farewell, then, for the present," replied Sir Robert Killigrew; "I had better not accompany you."

"Perhaps not," said Seymour.

Bidding him adieu, and then, taking his way towards the tower in which Sir Thomas Overbury was confined, he passed once or twice under the windows without looking up, seeing that there were several persons in the open space between the walls. At length, Overbury's window opened, but Seymour marked what he did not, that there was a workman wheeling a barrow round the other side of the tower, and, taking another turn, he came back again, and looked around.

"Hist, hist!" cried the prisoner; "speak to me for a moment, Mr. Seymour."

“ I will be back in an instant,” replied the other, “ when I make sure that we are not observed.”

In a few minutes, he again paused beneath the window, the sill of which was nearly level with his head, but a little above, and, looking up, he said, “ Now, Sir Thomas, the workmen have gone to dinner; there is no one on the walls—what would you say ?”

“ Many things—many things,” answered Overbury; “ but the time is short, and I cannot say all. I have injured you, Mr. Seymour, — you and the Lady Arabella, too. I would fain have your forgiveness, and beseech hers. I did it to serve a faithless man, who has placed me within these bars. I, it was, who informed the King of your meetings, and brought about your ruin. Had I known that you were married, I would have cut out my tongue ere I had uttered those words !”

“ But did you not, likewise, Sir Thomas, write to warn her to escape ?” asked Seymour. “ I have heard so on good authority, and that such was one of your offences with the King.”

“I did, I did,” answered the knight; “but it was too late.”

“Well then,” rejoined Seymour, “the good act blots out the bad one. You have my forgiveness freely, Sir Thomas; and I may well assure you of my dear wife’s also; for she it was, who wrote to tell me you had done so, with words of kindness and gratitude.”

“God’s blessing upon her!” cried the captive; “but I would fain do more. You are aware, sir, doubtless, that a permission in due form, under the King’s own hand, was given for the lady’s marriage to a subject. Why not use it for a justification?”

“It has been urged already,” replied Seymour; “but the King heeds it not. It was given to the Lady Arabella by the Countess of Shrewsbury; and we have demanded, all of us, if we have been guilty, that a public trial should take place. But the laws are now the common mockery of every idle fellow at the Court.”

“It is so, indeed,” replied Sir Thomas Overbury, in a sad tone; “I know it but too feel-

ingly. So, that is vain," he added, after a moment's thought, "then; you have nothing left but flight."

"How can it be effected?" asked Seymour, in a doubtful tone.

"By you—as easily as the wind waves yonder flag," replied the knight. "Oh! had I but your liberty to walk about unwatched, I would place the seas betwixt myself and England ere three days were over."

"But how — but how?" demanded Seymour. "If you show me how, I will thank you indeed."

"In a thousand ways," answered the captive. "Why not, in a workman's dress, at some unsuspected hour, take yonder barrow, and wheel it through the gates? Who would stop you—who would ask a question? I have seen it done a dozen times at least.—Why not, habited as a carter, follow some empty waggon that has brought billets or merchandize into the fortress?"

"The plan is not a bad one, in truth," said

Seymour ; “ perhaps, if driven to it, I may execute it.”

“ Driven to it !” exclaimed Sir Thomas Overbury. “ Is not every man, who is detained a captive here unjustly, driven to take measures for his own deliverance ? Or do you expect that the King will be mollified, and give his kind consent to your reunion with your fair wife ? Ah, my good sir ! you do not know the man. Were you aware of all that I could tell, you would entertain no hope. Dark and dreadful, sir, dark and dreadful are the secrets of that palace at Whitehall. But, if they mind not what they do, and continue this persecution of an innocent man, those secrets shall be told, let them affect whom they may.”

“ I beseech you, Sir Thomas Overbury,” said Seymour, “ be careful. Remember, rash words may provoke revenge ; and you are in the hands of men both powerful and unscrupulous. Threats, I fear, will avail but little.”

“ I have no other means !” exclaimed Sir Thomas, vehemently ; “ the hope of truth, kindness, or justice from them, is vain. ’Tis but

from their fears that I can entertain any expectations. But, hush!" he exclaimed, "hush! —walk on, walk on! I see the Lieutenant coming along the wall."

Seymour, who was himself hidden by the tower, instantly proceeded in the direction of another building, some way before him, with his arms folded on his chest, and his eyes bent down to the ground, in meditation on what he had just heard. He knew not that the lieutenant was coming in the opposite direction; but after he had walked forward about a hundred yards, that officer came down by some steps from the wall, and joined him, saying, "Give you good morning, sir; I hope you are well to-day!"

"As well as one can be, Wade, in this place," replied Seymour; "and that is not too well."

"Faith, sir, I do not know," answered Wade; "I feel myself very well here, and do not wish to change."

"I am sure I hope you may remain, Wade," replied the prisoner, "as it satisfies yourself; and your loss would be a sad stroke on me."

“ Yet, Mr. Seymour, I am afraid we must both make up our mind to my going,” said the Lieutenant. “ The crows of the Court are picking a hole in my coat because a gentleman, passing through, spoke for a few moments with Sir Thomas Overbury at his window, and I am to be dismissed, it seems. Sir Gervase Elways has given the Lord Rochester a thousand pounds, I hear, to have the post; so he is sure to get it. He may have more to give before he has done, however.”

“ To what amount do you think ?” asked Seymour, with a smile. “ The rapacity of these people is somewhat extensive.”

“ To the amount of his conscience and his soul, perhaps,” replied the officer in a meaning tone. “ But these things do not do to talk of, Mr. Seymour, and if they drive me out so unjustly, I should much like to take some who are within these walls along with me.”

“ Would to heaven you would make me of the number !” replied Seymour.

The lieutenant gazed at him with a smile, and then answered: “ You know, sir, that

there is not a man in the Tower whom I would sooner see out of it than yourself, from gratitude to my good Lord of Hertford. But in these matters, sir, every one must take care of himself, and I fear I must not do any thing to help you out."

"Thanks for your good wishes, Wade, at all events," replied Seymour. "So poor Sir Thomas Overbury is kept a close prisoner."

"Too close, sir," said the Lieutenant; "too close not to make men think that the offence charged against him is but a pretext, and that there is darker work below. I am not a man to serve their purposes, however, and I fancy my crime is, more refusing to let some persons have access to him, than permitting others. My Lord of Rochester sent a man here yesterday morning to wait upon him, as he said—a fellow whose look I love not. So I told him that no one should wait upon a close prisoner in my custody but my own servants. For them I can be answerable, not for others. This is my true fault, sir. But you must be good enough, in your walks, not to approach the Beauchamp Tower, whatever you

do, as, if any one is seen speaking with the poor man again, I must place him in a less convenient room, and I do not wish to deal harshly with one I so much pity."

"You are a good fellow, Wade," replied Seymour, shaking his hand; and, leaving the lieutenant, he walked on, saying to himself, "This is something gained: Wade will shut his eyes as far as possible, that is clear.—Escape, then, will be easy, but it must be executed before he is removed."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE morning meal was over at the house of Mr. Conyers ; and the Lady Arabella, rising from the table, approached one of the windows which stood open, and gazed out upon the green lawn and the fine old trees, while an expression of deep melancholy came over her face, which had before been cheerful. As she thus stood, the master of the mansion approached her, saying, “ ’Tis a beautiful day, lady, would you not like to walk forth ? ”

“ Not yet,” answered Arabella. “ I was thinking, Mr. Conyers, how quietly life might pass in such a sweet place as this, without ever stirring beyond those walls, and I was asking myself what it was that made confinement within them so burdensome. Here I have almost all that heart could desire, a kind host and hostess,

every luxury that wealth can afford, fine sights before my eyes, sweet sounds for my ear, the gentle breath of summer fanning my brow, and space as large to roam through at my will, as, to say sooth, a woman's feeble frame can well wander over untired. And yet I cannot school my heart to content."

Mr. Conyers did not know well how to answer her. He was not willing to jar a thoughtful mind with a trite common place, and therefore he only inquired "Pray, how did you settle the question, dear lady?"

"I asked myself, if liberty was all that I wanted," continued Arabella; "that bright spectre, the reality of which man can never know on earth; for if we be not slaves to others, we are still slaves to our own infirmities; and this flesh is the true prison after all. But I have never sought much liberty. I have been right willing to bow my designs to those of others, to yield ready obedience where, perhaps, I had a right to resist, striving to make my own heart my world, where no one can forbid the spirit from wandering in the garden which itself has planted. I

have sought little else but that. I will tell you what it is that makes even this sweet spot a prison. It is not that I cannot pass those gates, for were I happier, I should never wish to pass them.—I have no desire for the wide world.—But it is, that those I love can never enter them, that the friends who are dearest, the hearts that cherish me, the souls with which mine is linked, have no admission here. I will go weep,” she cried, suddenly dashing a tear from her dark eyelashes—“ I will go weep, and I shall be better then.”

Thus saying, she quitted the room, while Mr. Conyers stood in the window with a sad and thoughtful brow.

“ I will be gaoler no longer,” he said, after a long pause ; “ this sweet girl is shamefully ill-treated ; and if an Englishman’s rights and liberties be really valuable, they should be as dear to me in the person of another as of myself. I have served this King well enough, without having this task thrust upon me. I will be a gaoler no longer, and so I ’ll tell the King to-morrow when I see him.”

“What are you muttering there, Conyers?” asked his wife, who was still sitting at the table.

“I was saying, Joan,” replied Mr. Conyers, “that I have had enough of a bad and disgraceful task, which no one had a right to force upon me without even asking my consent. Let the servants know, that the strict watch which I have seen kept up, without my orders, displeases me.”

“But it was by the King’s orders,” replied the lady, “and you forget that you lose all chance of promotion, if you disobey.”

“Out upon promotion at such a price!” replied her husband. “I have yielded to this too long. I am not a turnkey; my servants are not spies, or if they are, they shall stay no longer here. If the King must have such vermin, let him keep them himself, I will not. What right had he to impose such a trade upon me? and as I have never promised to obey, I will do so no more. I even reproach myself that I have done it so long already. The grief of the sweet lady touches me. Were she harsh and vehement, proud and indignant under injustice, I might feel it less; but she bears her wrongs with such gentle

meekness, even when she feels them most poignantly, that it were a base heart indeed which did not share her sorrow and take its part with her."

"Well, Conyers," answered the lady, "I grieve for her too; but I see no cause why you should sacrifice yourself for others; and you must recollect that if she were any where else she might be treated still more harshly."

"That comforts me for the past," answered her husband. "If I had refused to receive her, others would have been found to undertake any base work that a king may require of a subject; but I can bear it no longer; and at all events none shall give orders in my house but myself—Baldock," he continued, as a servant entered to clear the table, "call the men and women of the household hither. My own, I mean, not the Lady Arabella's people."

The servant retired, and Mr. Conyers walked with a hasty step up and down the room, still murmuring to himself, "It is too much."

In a few minutes the greater part of the household, which, as was the case in every gentleman's establishment of those days, was about five times

as numerous as at present, was arrayed at the further end of the room, displaying a number of somewhat anxious faces ; for their master's summons had been accompanied by an intimation from him who bore it, that Mr. Conyers seemed somewhat angry.

“ Shut the door,” said that gentleman. “ Now mark me, men and maids. I have seen things that I dislike. No matter what. But a spy is a thing I dislike, a base unworthy animal, which I will drive forth from my house like mice or rats, or any other vermin. Let me have none of them, or if I catch them, beware their ears.— You all know me well. I love my people as my own family, while they are honest and true ; but no person, not the highest in the land, has a right to give orders in this house but myself, and if those orders are disgraceful to a good man of an upright heart, I will find means to punish him who obeys them. You all understand me, so away without a word.”

“ Well, Conyers, you know best,” replied his wife, as the servants withdrew, but I cannot help thinking — ”

“Do not think at all, good wife,” replied her husband, “except about puddings and pies. In this matter I am determined, so take care that I have no meddling. To-morrow I go to the King, and shall tell him what I think. He may send me to the Tower if he pleases ; for it seems he may put an English gentleman in gaol at his will, but he has no power to make him a gaoler.”

While these events were taking place below, Arabella retired to her room, and for some time gave way to tears. She had just wiped away the drops from her eyes, when Ida Mara entered and approached her in silence, gazing upon that fair face, on which the recent marks of grief were still evident.

“Dear lady, you are very sad,” said Ida Mara at length ; “but nevertheless I am in great hopes that in a few days, you will be free. I told you last night what I had heard, that the difficulties respecting the papers of the ship were all removed, and that this day she would be prepared to sail to whatever port you like.”

“God send it,” answered Arabella, “for though I am better in health, Ida, I am very

gloomy. This long absence from my husband, the difficulties and dangers of this enterprise, the long, wide-spread, misty blank of the future, all rise up before my mind, and agitate and terrify me."

Ida Mara continued for some minutes in conversation with her mistress, trying to soothe and cheer her; and when she had in some degree succeeded, she added, "I hope I shall have more news for you in an hour; for I must now go forth to see some one who has written, asking me to come along the road to Hornsey. I do not know the hand, but it is in good Italian, and may be from some of your friends."

"Well, go, then; go, Ida," replied the lady, "but take care. I always fear for you, after that adventure you told me of in London; and what should I do without you, my dear girl?"

"I have often thought of that lady," replied Ida Mara; "but I have less fear now. You have friends here, and there are fortunate circumstances more than you know of."

"Indeed!" said Arabella. "What may they be?"

“First,” answered Ida Mara, “Mr. Conyers has just told the servants that he will have no spying into your actions, and is angry that you have been so watched. This is a great point gained, for servants soon learn to take the tone of their masters. But there is something more which I have thought, for these three days, to speak to you about. I often asked myself if the King’s will, or anything else, were to take me away from you, what you would do for assistance? Your maid Jane is faithful enough I believe; but she wants quickness, forethought, and skill. A day or two ago, however, I found that you have another friend in the house, the good woman Maude, who often comes in to see if she can help you.”

“Indeed!” cried Arabella; “I should not have thought it, for she is somewhat rude and uncouth in speech.”

“Ah! dearest lady,” replied Ida Mara, shaking her head, “they say, in my country, that the sweetest oranges have the roughest rinds. She came three days ago into my chamber, and talked long about you. The good soul wept

when she spoke of all that you have suffered, and said such words of the King as would send her into prison, were they heard. She said she was born upon the lands of your grandfather, Sir William Cavendish, and I am sure, quite sure, from all she told me, that you may trust to her entirely. She was sent here, it seems, the day of your arrival, to see what was in the packet that Markham brought. She laughed when she told me, saying, that, as it was, there was nothing in it which might not be mentioned, but that if there had been, she would have lost her eyes for the time, at all events. She is clever, too, and shrewd, though in a homely way; but I am sure you might trust her, lady, if anything should take me from you."

"Ida, tell me the truth," said Arabella, with an anxious look; "have you heard anything that makes you suspect such a separation? Do you believe that it is about to take place?"

"No, lady; no, dear lady," replied the fair Italian girl. "I have heard nothing but what I have told you, in truth. I would not deceive you on any account: no, not for your own good;

for it is not right, and I never saw any thing but evil come of doing wrong. I know not how it was, but when I saw this note written in a hand I did not know, a foolish fancy came across my mind, I do not well know what, — a fear — no, scarcely a fear, — a doubt ; and I determined, ere I went, to tell you what I thought of Maude.”

“ I wish you would not go, Ida,” said the lady ; “ indeed, I wish you would not go.”

“ Nay, but I must,” answered Ida Mara ; “ they may wish to see me about some point of vital consequence, on which your welfare would depend. I must go, indeed ; and the sun is getting high, so that I ought not to tarry longer. I will be back again with all speed, dear lady. It was a foolish fancy of mine, idle, and groundless, I am sure.”

Thus saying, she kissed Arabella’s hand, and withdrew.

For several minutes the lady sat in sad and apprehensive meditation, with her eyes cast down towards the ground ; but then she rose with a sigh, and covering her head, walked out into the grounds, sauntering slowly along in the sunshine.

After that, she sat herself down at the foot of an old oak, the wide contorted branches of which, with their thick covering of leaves, afforded a pleasant shade. Musing sadly, she there remained for near an hour, raising her eyes from time to time towards the gates, which she still kept within sight. Ida Mara, however, did not appear, and Arabella became anxious.

In about a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Conyers came out and joined her, trying to give her consolation, after her fashion ; but she was not a person with whom the poor captive's heart could feel at ease. She knew her to be worldly and selfish, and, though devoted to her husband, and obedient to his wishes, there was a great difference in the manners of the two, even when doing the same things, which Arabella felt with all the sensitiveness of misfortune. Her presence then, under the anxiety which oppressed her, was a burden, rather than a relief ; and after remaining, out of courtesy, for about a quarter of an hour, she rose and went back to her apartments.

Time passed, and Ida Mara did not come ; and, at length, Arabella, giving way to the feel-

ings she could not restrain, wept long and bitterly. Rousing herself, at length, she called her maid from a neighbouring room, "Tell Cobham," she said, "to come to me instantly.—Ida has not returned?" she asked, with a last lingering hope.

"No, my lady," replied the maid; "Mistress Ida went out near three hours ago, but has not yet come back. I wonder what can have become of her."

"Send Cobham here," repeated Arabella, in a faint tone; and sitting down again, she leaned her head upon her hand, with a sickening feeling of desolation at her heart.

"Cobham," she said, as soon as the man appeared, "I am anxious about my poor Ida Mara. She went out three hours ago to take a short walk towards Hornsey, expecting to be back immediately, but she has never returned, and I fear some evil has befallen her. I wish you would take another man, and seek for her in that direction. Make inquiries of all the people that you see, and bring me word what they say. You know how dearly I love her."

“So does every body, madam,” replied the man. “I would rather lose my hand than that any ill should befall her. I will leave nothing undone to find her, lady, and be back as soon as possible.”

It was nearly evening when he returned, but he returned alone ; and Arabella, when, from the window, she saw him coming, hastened out herself to meet him.

“Have you no news ?” she cried ; “have you no news ?”

“Nothing satisfactory, lady,” replied the man ; “but I met a gentleman about half an hour ago, who, when I made inquiries of him, drew me aside from the other man, and asked me my name. I told him, and he then gave me this note for you, telling me to bear it to you with all speed, and to deliver it in secret. He said, moreover, that some of the King’s people had been about all the morning, adding, he doubted not, that they had taken the young gentlewoman—perhaps before the Council. I came back to bring you the note, leaving my companion

to pursue the search ; and now, I will go back to help him, though I fear it will be in vain."

"Go, go, good Cobham," replied Arabella, concealing the note in her bosom with a trembling hand ; "but be back at night, for I may need you.—And yet, no," she added, "I will not be so selfish. Seek my poor Ida, wherever she is likely to be found. Bring me some tidings of her, at all events."

"But if they have taken her away to the Court," answered the servant, "they will never let me bring her back."

"It is not that I fear," said Arabella ; "if she be at the Court, she is at least in safety. But there are other things I dread, good Cobham. She has enemies, as who has not ? Seek for her then, till dark ; and if you find her not, set out by day-break to-morrow for the Court. To hear that she is there, will be a relief to me ; but I fear—I much fear it is not so. You will there gain tidings, however, whether she has been brought before the King or not. If she have I

shall be satisfied ;—but indeed, indeed, I must have tidings of her.”

“ You shall, madam, if human power can gain them,” replied the man ; and, while he proceeded to execute his task, Arabella returned to the house.

CHAPTER IX.

“ No news of her ! no news of her ! ” said Arabella, addressing, in a sad tone, the maid Jane, who was arranging some articles of dress in her room.

“ Indeed, lady,” replied the maid, with a manner so much less earnest than Arabella’s own feelings, that it seemed to her, harsh and cold. “ Indeed, lady, I am sorry to hear that ; but I dare say the King’s people have got hold of her. They tried to question me one night at Greenwich ; and when I said I had nothing to tell, they threatened to apprehend me and bring me before the Council.”

“ I trust it is into their hands she has fallen,” said her mistress, “ for then she has nothing to fear.—Now leave me, good girl, for I would fain think over this matter.”

The maid obeyed; and the moment she was gone Arabella locked the door, drew forth the note from her bosom, and read it with eager eyes. As she did so she trembled violently, and sank down into a chair, murmuring, "Alone, alone!—All this to be done, and no one to help me!—Oh, Ida, Ida, it was cruel to take you from me! What is to be done, my thoughts are all in confusion?—How can I ever carry this through by myself!" And bending down her head, she leaned her forehead upon her hand, and closed her eyes, as if seeking to still the busy and hurrying images of danger and disaster which whirled through her brain.

"But the good woman, Maude," she said, at length; "Ida told me she would give me aid. Oh, can I trust her? And even if I can, 'tis sad to have none but a stranger to rely on for support. Oh, Ida, dear, good friend, where art thou now?—But it must be done. That girl Jane I can place no trust in. She is cold and selfish; ay, and dull too. I must speak to the woman Maude, and that directly." And rising, she unlocked the door, and called the maid.

“Jane,” she said, “I wish you to remove all those things from the end of the room into that little cabinet there, and—”

“Dear lady,” exclaimed the girl, interrupting her, “I can never do it by myself. I must have one of the men to help me.”

“I was going to say you cannot do it by yourself,” replied Arabella, “but I will not have the men brought hither. Go and call good Mistress Maude: she is strong and willing, and I know her.”

The girl obeyed, and in a few minutes returned with the person she had been sent to seek. Having received the directions of the lady, they proceeded to execute them; and Arabella continued to gaze upon them as they did so, with a hesitating uncertain look, as if she wished to speak, yet was afraid.

At length, however, when they had done, she broke silence, saying, “My poor Ida, whom they have taken from me, tells me, Maude, that you were born upon my grandfather’s estate at Hardwick, in Derbyshire. I should like much to talk with you about it, but have something to

do just now. Can you come to me in an hour?"

"Oh yes, dear lady," replied the good woman. "I'll come without fail. I often wished to tell you, but did not venture to speak to so great a lady."

"A very poor one now," replied Arabella, "and never a very proud one, Maude. Pray come."

"That I will, madam," answered the servant, and retired.

For half-an-hour more the maid Jane continued to bustle about the chamber, doing but little, yet fancying herself very busy. At the end of that time, however, she left the room, and before the hour was fully gone, Maude was standing by the side of Arabella's chair. The question of Hardwick and Sir William Cavendish was soon discussed; and Arabella, looking up in the good servant's face, said, in a sad tone, "My good mother, whom you talk of, never thought to see her child so unhappy as I am; and she was spared the sight."

"'Tis a sad case, dear lady, 'tis a sad case,"

replied the servant. "When I think of it, and how little you deserve such treatment, I could tear the eyes out of that King, or cry."

"And now," said Arabella, "they have taken Ida Mara from me, at the very moment I needed aid and comfort most ; and I have none to help me."

"Don't say that, lady ; don't say that," cried the good woman ; "I am not like Mistress Ida, to be sure ; for she is as gentle and clever a young lady, as I am a rough and dull poor creature ; but still I will help you in any way that you may command, cost what it may."

"Will you, indeed ?" asked Arabella, taking her hand, and gazing up earnestly in her face.

"That I will, lady," replied the maid, "even if it goes with my head. I never knew any one that would not help you ; you get round everybody's heart ; and my poor master is half mad at being made your gaoler. You have nothing to do but to command ; I will obey you, without one care for the rest."

Arabella covered her eyes with her hands, and burst into a violent and sobbing fit of tears ; for

the words of affection and kindness, in moments of deep sorrow and anxiety, seem, by their gentle touch, to unfetter the strongest feelings of the heart, and leave them to break forth in unrestrained emotion.

She soon recovered, however, and pressing the servant's hand in both her own, she cried, "Thank you, thank you ! Mr. Conyers said something about going to the King to-morrow ; do you know when he sets out ?"

"At two, madam," said the good woman ; "his horses are ordered at that hour ; and Mrs. Conyers goes with him."

"Oh, that will just do," exclaimed the lady, "for the hour named is three. I must send the girl Jane away on some pretence."

"Oh, I will give her occupation, madam," replied Maude ; "and if you want people out of the way, that is the best time of all ; for there is a match of foot-ball on Highgate Green, and most of the men my master does not take with him will be there, I dare say ; for, when the cat's away, the mice will play, you know, lady. Pray have you any one you love, coming to see you ?

If you have, I will take care that gates shall open, and doors be undone, without any one knowing aught about it."

"No," answered Arabella timidly, and looking anxiously in the woman's face to mark the effect produced by what she was about to say; "it is not that, good Maude, but, on the contrary, I am going to see those I love."

The woman looked surprised, and paused a moment thoughtfully, without reply.

"Well, it does not matter," she said at length, "whatever you wish I will do, lady. But I hope you have friends without to take care of you when you are there."

"Many," answered Arabella, "many, good Maude, watching for me anxiously. If, therefore, you can contrive to give occupation to my girl Jane, and come to me as soon as ever your master and mistress are gone out, you will confer an everlasting obligation upon one, who will never be unthankful, whether she have the means of showing her gratitude or not."

"Fear not, lady; fear not, sweet lady," replied Maude; "nothing shall stop me; and now, I un-

derstand what you mean, all shall be ready. But I suppose we shall have Master Cobham to help us."

"Alas ! no," replied the lady ; " he is seeking for poor Ida ; and I fear will have occupation enough."

" Well, well, we can do without," rejoined Maude. " But I had better go now, for fear people should suspect any thing."

During the many hours which had yet to run ere Arabella's project of escape could be executed, as may be well supposed, her mind continued in a state of agitation and alarm, which would have overthrown her corporeal powers and rendered her unfit for the task, had not the sweet hope of seeing him she so dearly loved, given her support and strength. Sleep visited her eyelids but little ; and the very efforts she made to overcome her apprehensions and invigorate herself for the performance of her purpose, but tended to unnerve her.

She did her best, however, to appear cheerful and at ease in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Conyers ; and Time, though his wings seemed

cut during the first hours of the morning, at length brought about the moment she desired.

A little after two, she saw the coach, which contained her host and hostess, roll away from the door of the house, followed by all the train of servants and horses, which were the customary accompaniments of ever so short a journey in those days, with people of wealth and station. Almost immediately afterwards, while she was waiting in agitated expectation for the coming of the good woman, Maude, her maid Jane entered, and asked her mistress's permission to go out for a short time, adding, in a deprecatory tone, "I have not been beyond the gates for more than a fortnight."

Arabella gave the permission with almost too much readiness; and in ten minutes after, she saw a gay party of men and maids take their way up the gravel walk.

The next instant, there was a tap at the door; and Maude came in exclaiming, "Now, lady, now, the house is quite clear; there is nobody left but the cook and myself, and the old butler, who is in the buttery at the back of the house,

corking the wine, and grumbling at the young lads for leaving him alone, though he has given them permission. I have brought you a cup of wine and a manchet, to strengthen you for your walk."

"But I must dress first," cried Arabella, whose limbs would scarcely support her. "I must not go in this garb."

"Take some wine, lady; take some wine," said her companion; "there is much courage in the bottle. What dress shall I give you?"

Arabella put her lips to the cup which the woman held, and took a small portion of the wine. "You will find it there, Maude," she said, "in that cupboard.—There is the key. It is wrapped in linen."

Her companion took the key, opened the closet, and brought out the packet which had by this time been opened; but, as she carried it to the bed side, a sword fell out, and starting she exclaimed, "Why, goodness, lady, it is a man's dress!"

"Ay, good Maude," answered Arabella, while the colour rose warmly into her cheek. "I could

not hope for security in any other guise. You must help me to put it on, for I am so little accustomed to such a thing that I should never accomplish it alone."

"Oh, I have seen many a lady in a man's dress," answered Maude, "in masques and mummings, in the Queen's time. Take heart, take heart, dear lady, do not let that frighten you. It matters not much what be the garb, so that you be safe under it. Here is a goodly doublet, trimmed with bugles. You had better put this on first. Let me untie your dress, lady—ay, it is pinned I see. Come, come, let me help you, I will do it as soon again; your hands tremble so."

Arabella's gown was soon stripped off; and in its place, her fair form was clothed in a velvet coat, though, to say truth, it needed some artful filling out to make it in any degree fit her slender waist.

"Why these wide French hose," cried Maude, taking them up from the bed upon which she had laid them, "are as good as a petticoat at any time."

"Better for my purpose," answered Arabella

with a faint smile. "Yet I think I should die with shame to be seen in them, were it not for so great an object. That cloak is very large, however, and will nearly hide me altogether."

Some farther progress was then made in dressing her, and a long pair of russet boots with red tops, the least in size that Markham could procure, were drawn over her small feet and slender limbs. She was obliged to take them off again, however, for they were still too large.

"In truth," she said, "they will take slippers and all. Give me the shoes, good Maude. Now for the rapier," she continued, when the boots were once more fitted on. "Heaven send I have not to draw it; for I fear the sight of a sword, well nigh as much as the King."

The cloak was then put on, and a large black hat, having some of the long locks of hair, at that time in fashion amongst men, fastened into the crown, was pulled over her fair brow.

"There now," cried Maude; "you are as gallant looking a young cavalier, as I should wish to look at."

"A sad, faint-hearted one," answered Ara-

bella. "Run, good Maude, run and see if the way be clear. I fear my little strength will fail me, if we stay long."

"Finish the wine, lady; finish the wine, and take some bread with it," answered her companion. "I will go and make sure that all is right. Drink the wine, I beseech you. You need not think of your head. Fear will take off the effect."

Thus saying, she sped away, and returned in a few minutes, saying, "All is safe, the cook is by the kitchen fire, sound asleep; and I hear old Jones thumping at his bottles. The door is wide open, and the iron gates unlocked. Come, lady, come, you had better lose no time."

"Come with me to the iron gates, Maude," said Arabella, in a beseeching tone; "I can scarcely keep my feet."

"That I will, lady," answered the good woman. "Courage, courage! the worst of the business is over."

"Would that it were," answered Arabella, leaning on her arm and proceeding down the stairs.

Nothing occurred, however, to increase her apprehension ; all was silent in the house, the quiet sunshine sleeping on the hall-floor, and the insect world buzzing without. Not a sound met the ear, but that hum, and the sighing of a light wind through the trees. Making a great effort, Arabella quitted the arm of her companion, when they issued forth from the door, and walking with an unsteady step along the path, soon reached the gates. There, Maude drew one of the valves back, and the lady put a ring into her hand.

“ No, no,” she said, “ I will none of it. Keep diamonds for yourself, lady ; but if you will give me something, I will take your gloves which lie upon the table, just to think of you by.”

“ Take any thing, good Maude,” replied Arabella ; “ and above all, my truest thanks.”

Thus saying, she passed out, and the maid closed the gates and retreated.

Arabella stood alone, for a moment or two, in the open road, with her heart faint, and her brain turning round. She felt lonely, desolate, ashamed, terrified ; she was like some domesti-

cated bird just escaped from its cage, not knowing which way to turn in the wide world around her.

The next instant, however, her eye fell upon the form of a man, well dressed, and of gentlemanly air, in the lane which ran under the walls of the grounds. Her first impulse would have led her to push open the gate and run back ; but, the moment after, she thought she recognized the person who was now approaching, though she had last seen him in a very different garb.

“ Oh ! it is — it must be — I am sure it is Markham,” she cried, panting for breath ; and then, running on, she met him and caught his arm for support.

“ Right ! right ! This is all right, lady,” he said ; “ every thing is ready ; I have horses at hand, a boat waits you at Blackwall, a ship at Leigh.”

“ But my husband ! my husband !” said Arabella.

“ He is by this time free,” replied Markham ;

“you will soon see him. My Lord of Hertford commends himself to you, and has sent down men and maids to meet you.”

“But my poor Ida Mara,” asked Arabella, “have you heard of her?”

“No, indeed,” answered Markham; “she must have been apprehended; but if so, she is quite safe.—Come, lady, come.”

Supporting her by the arm, Markham hurried on down the lane towards Newington, and through several other intricate turnings and windings, the rapid pace at which they went relieving the lady, in some degree, from her fears, by preventing her thoughts from resting on her own situation. She felt tired and exhausted, however, when, at the distance of about a mile and a-half from Mr. Conyers’ house, they came within sight of the small road side inn, called “The Rose.” Three strong horses stood before the door, with a man holding them, and a gentleman looking up the road.

“That is Crompton,” said Markham; “an old friend of your family.”

“How much I have to thank you all for,”

answered Arabella ; and the next minute Crompton advancing took her by the hand, exclaiming, “ How are you, sir ? I am very happy to see you here.”

The moment she paused, however, agitation and apprehension took possession of her again.

“ I feel sick and faint,” she said ; and the ostler who was holding the horses, remarking her face turn deadly pale, enquired, “ Shall I call for some wine ? The young gentleman seems ill.”

“ No, no,” answered Arabella ; “ some water. I am only fatigued with a long quick walk.”

Water was accordingly brought ; and then Markham, approaching to assist her, said, “ We are rather late ; we had better make haste.”

He then aided her to mount, while Crompton paid the ostler, who shook his head, observing, “ The young gentleman will hardly hold out to London, I think.” But the moment after, her paleness disappeared, blood mounted into her face, and with a crimson cheek, she rode on with Markham.

Crompton followed them immediately, and, pursuing the by-paths, with which they were well

acquainted, the two gentlemen led her at a quick pace towards Blackwall. They reached the shore of the river about six o'clock, and there they found waiting, a boat with four oars, containing two of her old men servants, and two women.

"We will see you down the river," said Markham; "but Crompton and I must there leave you. The boat behind contains your apparel and Mr. Seymour's."

"But my husband!" asked Arabella, in a low voice, "where is my husband, sir?"

"He will follow, he will follow," answered Markham.

"Sit here, sir," said Crompton, giving a sign to Markham to be cautious; "remember, lady," he continued, in a whisper, "these boatmen know nothing of the scheme;" and ordering the rowers to pull away, they were soon skimming over the bosom of the Thames.

The boat directed its course at once to Gravesend, which they reached two or three hours after nightfall.

"We must land here for a moment or two," whispered Crompton to the lady; "but Mark-

ham will arrange with the men to take you on, while you get some refreshment."

Poor Arabella did all they wished ; and though it was not without difficulty that her companions persuaded the rowers to go on to Leigh, a large bribe ultimately induced them to consent, and the lady and her companions were soon once more upon the Thames. The night, fortunately, was warm and clear ; and although Arabella was wearied and exhausted with anxiety, exertion, and want of repose during the preceding night, she closed not an eye, but watched the progress of the boat, with her thoughts full of him she loved ; the hope of soon seeing him, mingling with fears for his safety, and giving plentiful occupation for the busy mind during the whole night.

At length the sky began to glow with the first beams of the morning ; and a ship of considerable size was seen lying about a mile farther down the river.

" There is the vessel, lady," whispered Markham, " which I hope will soon bear you and your husband safe to the shores of France."

" Perhaps he may be on board already," said

Arabella, raising her head, which had been drooping with pure lassitude. "That indeed would give me new life."

"Perhaps he may be so," replied Markham, "but yet I doubt it. The wind is freshening for your voyage, however."

"We must stay for him, at all events," cried Arabella; "if he has not escaped I cannot make up mind to go."

"Indeed you are wrong," answered her companion, in the same low tone; "recollect it is you who are the object of the King's persecution, not Mr. Seymour. You, once safe in a foreign land, his liberation would soon follow. I doubt not, ere three months were over, the King's full consent to your union would be given, in order to induce you to return."

Arabella saw that there was some truth in what he said; but her mind took instant alarm at Markham's words. "I think you are apprehensive that he has not escaped," she said, in as firm a tone as she could command.

"No, indeed I am not," he replied; "I feel confident he has; for Sir George Rodney, Sir

Harry West, and many faithful friends, are all aiding him, and Wade, the Lieutenant of the Tower, disgusted at the treatment of the Court, will keep no very watchful eye upon his prisoner."

"God send it," cried Arabella.

"We shall soon know," rejoined Markham, "for he must be here in an hour at the latest."

"I hope — I trust, he is on board already," answered Arabella. "I have a fancy that it is so;" and she went on buoying herself up with the happy expectation, till they were alongside of the vessel, and she could see the people upon deck.

Her husband was not amongst them. "He may be below," she thought, and her first question, when lifted into the vessel was, "Has Mr. Seymour arrived?"

The answer was in the negative; and the hope which had supported her during the last two hours, being taken away, she sank at once fainting into the arms of Crompton, who was aiding her to her seat.

It was long ere she recovered herself sufficiently

to speak ; and then gazing around her, she found herself in the cabin of the vessel, with the two maids who had been waiting for her at Blackwall, using means to bring her to herself. She closed her eyes again, for Seymour was not there. In about twenty minutes after, there was a knock at the door ; and starting up, she exclaimed in a weak tone, but eagerly, “ Open it, open it, perhaps he has come.”

But it was only Markham who appeared.

“ Dear lady,” he said, approaching her side, “ Mr. Seymour has not arrived, and there is nothing to be seen of him, as far as we can see up the river. Every moment that you stay endangers your safety. If he has escaped, he has gone to some other port ; if not, your remaining here is ruinous to him and to yourself.”

“ Half an hour, yet half an hour,” cried Arabella ; “ I beseech, intreat you, my kind friend, stay but that short space.”

“ Be it as you will, madam,” replied Sir Griffin Markham, in a grave tone ; “ but that one half hour may be regretted bitterly hereafter, when it cannot be recalled.”

“Well, then, half that time,” said Arabella ; and bowing, the gentleman retired, giving orders to have everything ready to set sail the instant the signal was given.

The quarter of an hour was barely at an end, when he again went down, and approaching Arabella, said, “Now lady, now, remember the safety of many others is compromised, as well as your own.”

Arabella closed her eyes, and a slight shudder passed over her ; but she made no reply.

Sir Griffin Markham, however, took her silence for a mark of acquiescence, and going back to the foot of the ladder, exclaimed to those on deck, “Away ! Set sail !” and Arabella turned round upon the couch and deluged it with tears.

CHAPTER X.

WE must now turn to the events which were taking place in the City of London on the same day, but a little before the hour at which the Lady Arabella made her escape from the house of Mr. Conyers.

Anxiously William Seymour had counted every moment during that morning, till he saw at length a large cart loaded with billets of wood, enter the open space before the old palace, and slowly approach the door which led to the apartments he inhabited. He had nobody with him, and descending himself to speak with the carter, he paid him for the wood, showed him where to place it; and then saying, "I will send one of my people back with you," he retired quickly to his chamber, locked the door, and began hastily to change his dress. The entire suit of a common mechanic had been already prepared for him, and was soon

put on, making a great change in his figure and appearance ; but a quantity of jet black hair had been also provided, which, with a beard of the same colour, skilfully managed by the hands of a French artist for some of the mummings of the Court, completed his disguise.

By the time that all this was arranged, the wood was unloaded ; and, going down, he addressed the carter, saying, “ Now, my man, you had better move away, they will not let you stay here long.”

“ The gentleman told me he would send down one of his people,” replied the man.

“ Well, I am one of his people,” answered Seymour. “ What do you want ? A draught of beer, I suppose ? but we have none here for you in the Tower. There’s a groat for you, however, to buy some beer.”

The man took the money, whipped his horses, and moved dully on at their head, while Seymour, leaning his hand on the back part of the cart, followed, as if he was one of those attached to it. Proceeding at a slow pace onward, they soon reached the great western gate of the Tower,

where no question was asked, and the cart, with those who accompanied it, was suffered to go out though two or three persons belonging to the fortress, and a guard, were under the archway at the time. The carter then turned along the Tower wharf, but perversely stopped for a minute to speak a word to one of the warders at the south gate as he passed.

Seymour, however, though we must not say he felt no alarm, continued carelessly to lean on the back of the vehicle, till the man had done, and then followed as before, saying a word to him from time to time, to keep up the appearance of companionship. The last point of danger was the iron gate at the other end of the wharf; but it was opened to let them out without inquiry, and in a moment after the prisoner felt himself a free man again.

He was scarcely in the open street, when a gay-looking gentleman touched him on the arm, saying aloud "Hollo, my man, are you not one of Mr. Seymour's people?"

"I am Lord Beauchamp's cooper, sir," an-

swered Seymour, with a low bow. "Sir George Rodney, I think?"

"Yes," replied the knight; "I want to speak with you, my good fellow; come hither with me."

"I must go," said Seymour, addressing the carter; "good afternoon, comrade;" and, following Rodney, he hurried on through a number of narrow streets to a good-sized house on the other side of Tower Hill. The door was instantly opened to receive him; and, a moment after, Sir Harry West embraced him joyfully, exclaiming, "Welcome, welcome, my dear William! your brother is within there. Take a hasty farewell, and let us go."

"The boat is not come up," said Rodney.

"Where is Lady Arabella?" asked Seymour; "where is my dear wife?"

"On her way to Leigh by this time," answered Sir Harry West; "at least so I hope and trust. Run down, and see for the boat, Sir George. For Heaven's sake, let us not lose time!"

“I will be back ere you can wink,” replied Rodney; and while he was gone, Seymour proceeded to a small room, where several of his friends and relations were assembled.

While they were still in the midst of their congratulations, Sir George Rodney returned, saying the boat was ready; but that some of the Yeomen of the Guard were walking about suspiciously upon Tower Hill.

“Let me see, let me see!” exclaimed Sir Harry West; and he and Rodney went to the door, with one of the servants, who was in their confidence.

In an instant he returned, however, saying, that the men were merely lounging about; and taking leave of his friends, Seymour issued forth with the servant we have mentioned, whose garb harmonized better with the disguise he wore, than the dress of Rodney and the old knight.

The two gentlemen followed only a step behind; but, ere they had gone thirty yards upon Tower Hill, and just as they were passing a party comprising two men, one walking on either side of a young and ladylike woman, a quick cry

burst from the girl's lips, and she darted towards Sir Harry West.

The two men caught her instantly by the arm ; but at the same moment the old knight threw himself directly in their way, exclaiming, " It is Ida Mara ! "

" Quick, quick ! " said Rodney, in a low voice to the servant ; " take him into the tobaccoist's on the other side of the hill. We will be with you in a minute ; " and while Seymour, after whispering, " See to her safety—see to her safety, for Heaven's sake, " hurried on to a house which then stood a little beyond the spot where the Royal Mint now appears, Rodney returned to the old knight, between whom and the men that were holding Ida Mara, high and angry words were now passing.

" I tell you we have the King's orders, " said one of the two ; " interrupt us, if you dare ! "

" I certainly shall dare, " replied Sir Harry ; " for I believe you to be uttering a gross falsehood, sir. You are not one of the King's servants, I know ; and it is but a fortnight ago

since I saw you drawing cold iron upon a servant who was accompanying this very young gentlewoman. Aid me, Rodney, to apprehend these men."

"Take care," whispered Rodney; "you will have the guard up."

"I fear there's no other course," answered Sir Harry, quickly; "we must act boldly."

"Have with you, then," cried Rodney; and turning to the men who were whispering together, without losing their hold of Ida Mara, he exclaimed, "Will you set the lady free, curs; or must I make the sun shine through you?" and he laid his hand upon his sword.

At that moment, however, three of the stout Yeomen of the Guard were seen coming from the gate towards them; and perceiving that there was no other resource, Sir Harry West called to them, and beckoned with his hand. The Yeomen instantly began to run, and the old knight, as they approached, exclaimed, "Here, guard! guard! These men are using the King's name on a false pretence."

"What is the matter—what is the matter?"

cried a warder, who was at their head. "We will have no tumults on Tower Hill."

"The matter is," replied Sir Harry West, "that these two men are detaining this young gentlewoman against her will, pretending that they have the King's orders. Now, I am sure that is false. Look at that fellow's face, how white it turns at the very sight of the Yeomen of the Guard; and this other man I know for the servant of a quack impostor, here about town."

"If it be so," said the burly warder, in a rough tone, "we will souse them in the river; but we must carry them before the lieutenant, first. Lay hands on them, my men, and you, sir, come along with us too; for we must have proof against them."

"That man's face is proof enough," replied Sir Harry West, hesitating, "and I was going with this gentleman on business of importance."

"See, see!" cried one of the men who had been holding Ida Mara; "he is afraid to make good his charge. He knows he cannot do it."

"Well! I will go!" answered Sir Harry

West. "Rodney, you must proceed and finish the business alone. You can speak my sentiments to the other gentlemen concerned, and explain to them the cause of my absence.—I will go with you, Ida," he continued. "Do not fear. In the hands of the King's yeomen you are quite safe."

"I fear nothing when you are with me, kind Sir Harry!" replied the girl.

"Come along then," said the Warder. "Sir Harry?—I wonder if you are Sir Harry West!" he continued, looking at the old knight. "I am sure you are, too. Why, I served with you, sir, in Ireland against Tyrone. Come along, sir, come along! We'll soon settle this matter; I would take your word against a thousand;" and the whole party walked on towards the gate of the Tower.

In the meanwhile Sir George Rodney hastened to rejoin Seymour, whom he found with the servant in the shop to which they had been directed. A few rapid questions were asked by Seymour in regard to the sudden appearance of Ida Mara; for, as may well be supposed,

he felt some alarm respecting Arabella herself. Rodney, however, had been informed by Markham, that the fair Italian had been missed from Highgate on the day before ; and, having satisfied his friend on this point, they proceeded to the water-side. But half an hour had already been lost ; and when they reached the bank of the river the boat, which had been prepared, was not to be found. After some inquiries, they entered a wherry, and rowed towards the stairs to which they were told it had been removed. But more time was thus lost, and, in all, nearly an hour and a half was consumed fruitlessly. It turned out, that the person appointed to steer the barge, a faithful but timid man, attached to the House of Hertford, had twice taken fright at some accidental events which he thought suspicious.

When, at length, he saw his young master in the boat, however, he regained confidence ; and, steering boldly past a party of the Royal officers who were going from Greenwich to Whitehall by water, he guided the vessel skilfully through the shipping in the pool and down the river.

The rowers plied their oars diligently ; but the time which had been lost, deprived them of the tide ; and by the time they came opposite to Erith it was running strong against them. Thus day broke before they reached Tilbury, and the wind, freshening and considerably agitating the water, retarded them still more. About nine o'clock, the weary rowers came in sight of Leigh ; but, to their disappointment, no ship was seen at anchor there, though two or three vessels under sail, were apparent at some distance.

It was now evident, both to Seymour and Rodney, that the boatmen could go no farther ; and, landing at Leigh, they hired a fishing-smack to convey them to a ship, which they had both fixed upon as the one that, according to the account of the people on the shore, had been lying there for two days, and had set sail about an hour before. The two gentlemen were soon embarked, and in the light boat which they had engaged, they overtook the larger and heavier vessel, still in the mouth of the river. But it proved to be merely a Dutch

brig, the captain of which would alter his course for no man, and an eager consultation was held between Seymour and his friend as to what was next to be done.

“Here comes a large vessel, apparently light and in full sail,” said Rodney; “if you will take my advice, you will board her at once, and hire her, at any price, to carry you to France. The wind is fair when once you are out of the river; and your friends here will let you know, where to rejoin the Lady Arabella; for she has certainly escaped, otherwise the Frenchman would not have set sail.”

“That is my comfort,” replied Seymour; “that is my comfort! She sacrificed all for me; and, knowing that she is safe, I care little what fate befalls myself.”

The plan proposed by the knight was accordingly adopted. The vessel towards which they now directed their course proved to be a collier returning to Newcastle; and, for the sum of forty pounds, the skipper consented to land Mr. Seymour on the French coast.

Taking leave of Rodney, then, with many ex-

pressions of gratitude, the fugitive bade adieu to the shores of England, not to return for years. The day was beautiful, the wind was fair and strong, and before evening the faint white cliffs of France were visible over the blue sea, spreading out wider and wider as the ship sailed along. Shortly after, the distant sound of a cannon struck the ears of those on board; and Seymour asked, "What can that be? The day is fine, the wind not high,—it cannot be a signal of distress!"

"It may be, sir," answered the master, "at sea; there is no knowing when an accident may happen."

But another, and another gun was heard, and then came a short pause; after which three more were fired in rapid succession; and Seymour, gazing anxiously from the stern, perceived some vessels, at the distance of seven or eight miles, in the direction of Pegwell Bay, with a wreath of white smoke streaming from the farthest of them. The next instant, a flash crossed the cloud, and then a second; and, after the lapse of some short time, the report of cannon was

again heard. The smoke now nearly concealed the ships, but, to the number of thirteen times, the same sounds reached the fugitive's ear; and then all was still again.

His heart was ill at ease. He would fain have persuaded himself that the event which gave him so much anxiety must be caused by some accidental circumstance unconnected with the fate of her who had sacrificed so much for him; that Arabella must ere that period have well nigh reached the French coast; but apprehension, more strong than argument, would not be stilled, and, sitting down by the helm, he buried his eyes in his hands.

He felt then,—whatever joy he might experience at his own escape—that the best right of man, the best gift of earth, was poor without her he loved,—that liberty itself was nothing without Arabella!

CHAPTER XI.

WE must now return for a time to the party which we left upon Tower-Hill. The Warder and Sir Harry West walked on talking together, with poor Ida Mara keeping close to the knight's side, till they were within about thirty yards of the gate of the Tower. Then, however, a slight noise behind caused the good soldier to turn round, exclaiming, "Look sharp to those two men!"

But his command came too late; for, at the very same moment that it was uttered, the personage who had been foremost in detaining the fair Italian, darted past the Yeoman next him, and, at full speed, ran away in the direction of Petty Wales. The Yeoman gave chase, while his companion seized the collar of the other man; but the pursuit was vain, for, embarrassed by his

somewhat cumbrous clothing, and being rather fat and pursy withal, the soldier lost ground every minute, and the fugitive disappeared amidst the lanes and alleys to which he directed his steps.

In the meanwhile, the other man was dragged into the Tower by the neck; and the good old knight, following with Ida Mara, desired to see the Lieutenant as speedily as possible, in order to ensure her liberation. While the Warder was gone for that purpose, Sir Harry West inquired in a whisper, whether Ida really thought that the people, in whose hands he found her, had authority from the King.

“I know not, indeed,” she replied; “they always told me they had; but I cannot help thinking, that, if it were so, they would have brought me before him yesterday. Instead of that, they took me to a lonely house on a heath, which I heard them call Hampstead, and there they kept me locked up till this morning. They then brought me down into the town, and kept me for an hour in a house out in that direction,” —and she pointed eastward with her hand—

“where a woman dressed in very fine clothes, came and looked at me, but said nothing, and went away again. After that, I was told they must take me to Whitehall; and they were carrying me along thither, when I saw you; and I think,” she added, in a lower tone, “Mr. Seymour, too.”

“Hush!” said the knight; “not a word of that;” and as he was still speaking, the warder returned to conduct him to the lieutenant’s lodging.

The man who had been kept without, in the porch of the gateward tower, was ordered to follow with a yeoman to guard him; and making Ida Mara, who seemed weary and faint, lean upon his arm, Sir Harry accompanied the warder between the walls, and was soon in the presence of Wade, the lieutenant.

That officer, at the first mention of Sir Harry’s name, had ordered him to be admitted, though he was in conversation at the time with a gentleman from the Court, who had come, upon the pretence of paying a visit to Mr. Seymour, but in reality to smooth down the irritated feelings

of the lieutenant, and induce him to resign his post quietly, without calling attention to the transaction by remonstrance or resistance. A servant had been sent to the apartments of Seymour, to know whether he would admit Sir Charles Warner to speak with him ; and the man returned, almost at the same moment that the good old knight and his fair companion entered the lieutenant's room.

Sir Harry might perhaps have felt a little alarmed, if he had known the servant's errand ; but the first words he heard were : " I have been to Mr. Seymour's, sir, and there saw one of his gentlemen, who says that his master is in bed with a raging headache, and cannot see any one ; he would not even go in to tell him."

" Oh ! never mind, never mind," replied Warner ; " I will see him another day — Master Lieutenant, I will wait a little till you have dispatched this other business, for our conversation was growing interesting. — Good morning, Sir Harry West."

" To me extremely so, sir," answered the lieutenant. " Sir Harry, I am your humble ser-

vant. What is this affair the warder tells me of?—Pray be seated, young lady.—The case does not seem to come within my cognizance.”

“It is simply this, sir,” replied the old knight. “This young lady I have long known, and dearly love, as to her I owe my life, she having nursed me through the plague some years ago. She is now a gentlewoman attending on the Lady Arabella Seymour; and on crossing Tower-Hill but now, I met her, hurried along against her will by two men, one of whom I know to be the servant of a rank impostor and conjuror, one Doctor Foreman.”

“Oh! I have seen him,” replied the lieutenant; “he is a knave, if ever there was one.”

“Ay, and has many ways of knavery,” said Warner; “the report goes, that many have suffered from his practises.”

“But what excuse do the men urge,” asked the lieutenant, “for using this violence to the lady?”

“They say they are commanded by the King to bring her before him,” answered Sir Harry West.

“I never said so,” exclaimed the man, who was standing guarded by a yeoman near the door; “my comrade did, and so he told me, too.”

“But where did they first lay hands upon the lady, and when?” asked the lieutenant, looking towards Ida Mara.

“It was yesterday, somewhat before noon,” she replied, in her sweet musical Italian voice. “I had gone out for a short time from Mr. Conyers’ house, where the Lady Arabella now lodges, to walk amidst the lanes in the neighbourhood, when these two men, with a third, whom I did not well see, though I think I know him, seized upon me suddenly, and, saying that it was in the King’s name, carried me to a place called Hampstead; where, in the midst of a wide heath, close by a deep wood, they placed me in a lonely house and kept me all the day. I demanded to be brought immediately before the King, but they only laughed at me; and when I would not eat the food they brought, they said that hunger would soon teach me better.”

“And why would you not eat, may I ask?” said the lieutenant.

“Because I was afraid of poison,” answered Ida Mara. “The man who I think was with them, is one named Weston, who I know deals in such drugs, and I fear fatally.”

“Why, that was Weston who was with me just now,” exclaimed the fellow at the door. “Some say he is Dr. Foreman’s son, and some his nephew.”

“And do you pretend,” asked the lieutenant, “that you have any commission from the King?”

“Not I, sir,” replied the man; “’twas Weston said so, and he told me the same story, engaging me to go with him, and promising me a noble for my reward.”

“The case seems very clear,” said the lieutenant; “the King would never employ such instruments as these; and I think, Sir Harry, that I had better keep the fellow for the stocks, and send the gentlewoman away with you.”

“It were the more prudent course,” said Warner, interposing, “to convey them both to the King. His Majesty’s name having been

used, we cannot take upon ourselves to judge what people he in his wisdom may think fit to employ ; and as the other man, it seems, is no longer here, from what the Warder said, to answer for himself, none is so fit to investigate the matter as his Majesty."

"Of course, of course," said the lieutenant ; "and as your reasons seem to me just, Sir Charles, I think I must act upon them.—Do you not think so, Sir Harry West?"

"That you must decide yourself," replied Sir Harry ; "but if such be your determination, I will ask you to wait for half an hour, till I can send two of my own men to accompany this fair lady to the Court and guard her back to my house, in case the King should not detain her at the palace ; for I have myself business which takes me in a different direction."

"I must return to Highgate with all speed, dear Sir Harry," exclaimed Ida Mara ; "the Lady Arabella will, I know, be alarmed at my long absence."

The old knight mused, and then answered, "It will be too late to return to-night, Ida ; but I

will let the lady know that you are safe, as soon as letter or messenger can reach her. But you will need refreshment, too, my poor child?"

"That she shall have while waiting for your men," replied the lieutenant; "and fatherly care, depend upon it. Come, fair lady, I will take you to good Mrs. Wade, my maiden sister, who has a tender compassion for all distressed damsels, and will show you all kindness and courtesy."

"The servants shall be here with all speed," said Sir Harry, rising. "Farewell, my dear child; we shall meet again, I trust, ere night. Then you shall tell me more of your adventures."

The lieutenant, according to his word, led poor Ida Mara to his sister, who fulfilled his promise of showing her kindness; and, about half an hour after, she was placed in a boat, with good Matthew Lakyn and another servant of Sir Harry West's, as well as a Yeoman of the Guard, and the man who had remained in custody. It took them near an hour to reach Whitehall, for the tide had not yet turned in their favour;

and the fair Italian was kept waiting for an equal space of time in a corridor, exposed to the gaze of all the passers by, and to the coarse observations of several of them.

At length however, an usher approached with a rapid but silent step, and told her to follow to the presence of the King. She found the Monarch in his closet with several gentlemen, some of whom she knew by sight, while the rest were strangers to her. Accustomed as she had been for some years, to see the Monarch daily, Ida Mara easily judged that he was in no very plausible humour, by the way in which he moved about in his chair, and lolled his tongue out of his mouth.

“What’s this, my woman, what’s this?” he said whenever she appeared. “No sooner have we done with one pother about the Lady Arabella, our headstrong kinswoman, than there comes another. Our Lieutenant at the Tower sends us word that you have been carried off forcibly from Highgate. What did these fellows say?”

“That it was by your Majesty’s commands,”

replied Ida Mara, "and consequently I obeyed implicitly."

"The condemned liars!" cried the King; "but you did right, lassie; you did right. What may this mean, my Lord Northampton? Why should any two men seek to carry off this young gentlewoman, and use our name to further their purposes?"

"In truth, sire," replied the Earl, "if your Majesty's keen judgment does not perceive the cause, it is vain for me to seek it; but I cannot help thinking that the King has already judged of the matter, and inquires but to show our want of skill."

"We have an inkling, we have an inkling," answered James, laughing, "and will send off to Highgate this very afternoon. Tell me, pretty mistress, have you ever given the Lady Arabella any offence?"

"None, may it please your Majesty," replied Ida Mara, eagerly. "I have ever striven to serve her faithfully and well, owing her my first duty, after God and your Majesty."

"Ay, but," demanded the King, "may she

not think, that your first duty was owing to her, before God and myself?"

"I trust not, sire; I trust not," replied Ida Mara, timidly, and not knowing what was to come next. "I have always heard the Lady Arabella express herself most submissively towards your Majesty."

"That's right, that's right," said the King; "submission in words is something, but we must have submission in deeds too, before we grant favour. And so, she never complained to you of the restraint to which we have thought it right, for her own good and that of the state, to subject her?"

"Never, sire," replied Ida Mara, simply; "I have seen her weep often; but never heard her complain."

"That's right, that's right," repeated James; "but yet it's just possible, mistress, that she may have been deceiving you."

"Oh no," cried Ida Mara, with the blood mounting to her cheek. "I do not think that she is capable of deceiving any one."

"We shall see, we shall see," answered the

King. "And so these men told you that I had commanded them to sieze you. When was this, lassie?"

"Yesterday morning towards noon," replied Ida Mara, "and they persisted in the same story to-day, when I met Sir Harry West on Tower Hill, and asked his protection."

"And what did Sir Harry reply to them?" demanded James. "He is a wise man, Sir Harry West, and not that unlearned in the humane letters. He expounded one night a passage of the Italian poet, Dante, without having heard an opinion upon the subject, in a manner quite conformable to our own, and thereby put to shame a gentleman of that country, who insisted upon it in spite of our expressed opinion, to which he might have reasonably bowed, that there was no latent or hidden meaning in the Poet's words, but a mere open and plain poetical figure.—What said the knight, I ask?"

"He said, sire," replied Ida Mara, "that he was sure your Majesty would never use such instruments as they were, and he called up some of the Yeomen of the Guard, who were standing

before the gate, and placed us all under their charge."

"The Knight was right, in fact, but wrong in inference," answered the King; "we did not employ the men; but there is no telling what instruments kings may sometimes see fit to use.— That their own wisdom must decide. Then again, as to his conduct, Sir Harry displayed his skill and judgment in a manner that deserves our approbation. Had he taken upon him to deliver you with his own hand, besides the chance of brawling, which is always an offence, he might have trespassed unwittingly on his duty to us. But, in placing the matter in the hands of our officers, he could not go wrong."

"It seems to me, sire," said the Earl of Northampton, "that these men, who have dared to use your Majesty's sacred name in an unlawful manner, must lose their ears. I look upon this to be a very great offence."

"Of that there can be no doubt," replied the King, "but we will confront the man they have caught, with this young gentlewoman, and hear

what he has to say. Let the fellow be brought hither."

The King's orders were immediately obeyed ; and the personage who had aided in carrying off Ida Mara from Highgate, was brought, white and trembling, into the King's presence. He was subjected by James himself to a very close and keen examination ; but he persisted in the story he had told the lieutenant of the Tower, saying, that the man by whom he had been employed, assured him that it was by the King's commands, and declaring that he knew nothing further on the subject. He acknowledged, indeed, that what Ida Mara had said, was correct in all points, but protested that nothing could be farther from his thoughts than to use the King's name unauthorized.

When questioned as to the name and character of his employer, he hesitated a little, but at length mentioned again the name of Weston, adding, that he was attached to Doctor Foreman, the celebrated Physician and *Naturalist*, — for such was the term which the Charlatan thought fit to apply to his more secret avoca-

tions, though he certainly used it in a sense very different from that which is attached to it at present.

The name of Doctor Foreman, however, created a little confusion in the King's closet. Lord Rochester and the Earl of Northampton whispered together for a moment behind the Monarch's chair; and Rochester then addressed a few words to James himself, in an under tone.

"Ay, what are you there?" exclaimed James; "have you only just arrived at it. I saw the matter from the beginning. This young gentlewoman did not serve the people's turn, to carry on their correspondences and communications; and so they have had her removed. But the lady shall to Durham to-morrow, if I am a crowned King; and you, my pretty mistress, shall be restored to her, with such other maids as we shall choose, knowing right well, how to select those that will be faithful and true, and not plotters and contrivers.—Who is that knocking at the door?—See, Carro! We will not have any one admitted just now."

Lord Rochester quitted the closet for a moment, and then returned with a face full of consternation.

“Mr. Conyers, may it please your Majesty,” he said, “is waiting without. I have not spoken to him, but the page says he is in dreadful agitation, on account of the Lady Arabella’s escape.”

“Ha ! how ! what !” exclaimed the King. “Her escape ! Body o’ me ! Call him in, call him in.—How now, sir ?” he continued, as Mr. Conyers appeared with strong marks of emotion on his countenance. “What’s your news ?”

“Such as I hardly dare to communicate, sire,” replied Mr. Conyers, “though I have ridden post haste to tell them. On my return to Highgate, after paying my respects to your Majesty, I found that—almost all the people of the house having been sent out of the way during my absence, upon one pretence or another—the Lady Arabella had made her escape.”

“I told you so ! I told you so !” exclaimed James : “the carrying off this girl was the first step. This is a deep-laid conspiracy, a plot as detestable as that of the Papists.—Send for Cecil

immediately, send for Cecil.—Let the Council be summoned within an hour.—My lords, we must look to the safety of the state ! There is no knowing where this may end. We shall have a rebellion. If such a firebrand as this kinswoman of ours, falls into the hands of foreign potentates, what is to become of us ?”

The confusion which now took place in the royal closet is beyond description. All order and regularity were lost in a moment. Every one talked to his neighbour. Very little real reverence was shown to the King. Some shrugged their shoulders and turned up their eyes ; and James himself was in the most pitiable state of agitation. He relieved himself at length by five or six horrible oaths ; and then, with difficulty obtaining silence, he addressed Mr. Conyers in an angry tone, interrupting his speech to that gentleman from time to time, to make some observation to his favourite, or those around.

“Sir,” he said, “you have betrayed our confidence, and misused our trust.—Have you sent for Cecil, my Lord Northampton ?—If you had been vigilant, sir, this could not have happened.

You do not know the consequences, sir, of what has taken place.—The devil is in these women, Carro ; they are always making mischief, and there is never any telling where it will stop.—You should have given us information of the first suspicious circumstance.”

“ I saw none, your Majesty,” replied Mr. Conyers, boldly.

“ Don’t interrupt us, sir,” exclaimed the King ; “ there are some men that have no eyes to see with, and some that do not choose to use them when they have got them. Now, I ’ll warrant you that you have come away without any clue to this mystery.—My Lord Northampton, send off directly to the Tower and order that young ne’er-do-well, William Seymour, to be put in close confinement ;” and he added a coarse allusion to the probability of children springing from the marriage of that gentleman with Arabella.

“ Well, sir,” he proceeded, turning to Mr. Conyers again, “ have you any clue, I say ?—I ’ll wager now you have come away without any pre-

cautions at all, just to give the girl time to escape."

"No, sire," replied Mr. Conyers, "though I thought my first duty was to make known to your Majesty what had taken place during my absence, I took care while my horse was being brought, to give orders for immediate pursuit in every direction; and very probably before I return, the Lady Arabella may have been brought back, or, at all events, information may have been obtained as to what course she has taken."

"Go and see; go and see," cried the King, "and let us have instant tidings of what you discover. Present yourself to-morrow at ten before the Council, and bring all whom you may judge to have participated in this conspiracy along with you.—Call a clerk, my Lord of Rochester; we will ourselves immediately dictate a proclamation."

"What is to be done with this young gentlewoman, sire?" asked the Earl of Northampton.

"Grey and Bradshaw will be very happy to

take care of her," said Lord Rochester ; " they have long wanted an opportunity of showing her their devotion."

" Hout, hold your silly tongue, with your gibing," cried James, " this is a serious affair, young man.—Where can the girl be bestowed, Northampton ?"

" May it please your Majesty," said Ida Mara, " I would fain retire to the house of Sir Harry West, who is my first friend in this country. I can then wait your Majesty's commands, if you should have anything else to require of me."

" That is right ; that is right," replied James ; " you are a wise and well-spoken young woman, and shall not be forgotten. The very fact of their having you conveyed out of the way, when the conspirators were about to execute the plot, is a proof that you did your duty faithfully to your King. You may retire. Now, send that man to the Fleet. By God's will, he shall stand on the Pillory, unless he makes full confession. Hold your tongue, sir ! We have no time to deal

with you now.—Sit down there, master clerk, and write.”

The King then proceeded to dictate a proclamation, which was afterwards modified by the advice of Cecil, but which in the first draft displayed, in a most ludicrous manner, the trepidation into which he was thrown by Arabella's escape. He worked himself into the belief, and even contrived to impress the same idea upon the minds of most of his counsellors, that the flight of his kinswoman, instead of being the mere effect of her attachment to her husband, originated in some dark and sinister design against his throne and family. His excited imagination pictured her throwing herself into the arms of some inimical power, and supported by fleets and armies, contesting with him the Crown of England. He saw Papists and Protestants alike in revolt against his authority, rebellion spreading over the land, and his very person in danger. In fact, all the wild images that could suggest themselves to the mind of a weak, cowardly, and tyrannical prince, rose up before him in an in-

stant, and displayed their effect in every word and action.

Nor did his terrors fail to be greatly increased when information was brought from the Tower, that William Seymour was no longer to be found within its walls ; and the whole Court was in a state of movement and agitation, during the greater part of that night and the succeeding morning. Letters were despatched to every port in the kingdom, with orders to stop the fugitives, and to send out vessels for their pursuit, if already at sea. Each of these despatches was marked with the superscription, common in those days on occasions of great importance, “ With haste, post haste, ride for your life, for your life ! ” and one of them, still in existence, bears the figure of a gallows and a halter, as an emblem of the King’s wrath against any one who should dare to disobey.

CHAPTER XII.

It is a strange and terrible ordination that the vices and passions, the follies and prejudices, the wickedness and the iniquity of man, which run in threads through the whole web of society, spoiling a fair and otherwise beautiful fabric, should chequer the fate of the most virtuous and good with the dark lines of sorrow and misfortune, and that in this strangely constituted world the best feelings of the best hearts, operated upon by the baseness of others, should be very frequently the causes of disaster and distress to those, who, if this earth were the soul's abiding-place, might claim the brightest lot that falls to the portion of humanity.

After leaving the mouth of the river, and rounding the north foreland, the Lady Arabella, somewhat recovered from the first effects of disap-

pointment, came upon the deck, and stood for a few minutes gazing over the world of waters. The wind, which had not been very favourable for their course down the river, was now all that could be desired ; but Arabella, anxious for Seymour's safety, first expressed a wish, and then entreated eagerly, that the captain would lay-to for a short time, to afford a chance of the arrival of her husband.

The master, now free from the river, was willing to accede to her wishes ; and even her attendants, who had recovered from their apprehensions, did not offer any opposition. Towards evening, however, as the expected boat did not appear, it was determined once more to sail on towards Calais ; and the execution of this resolution was carried on more eagerly, as a ship, then called a pinnace, but which would now be termed a sloop, was seen drawing towards them, with the Royal flag displayed. Scarcely were they under sail, however, when the pinnace fired a shot across their bows, as a signal to bring-to.

“ Ay, I thought so,” cried the Captain, with a loud oath in his native tongue ; “ this comes

of losing time. Go down below, lady, go down below ; your presence only cumbers us here. We shall reach Calais before them yet."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, make all sail," cried Arabella.

"Be you sure I will do that," replied the man ; "she shall stick out every inch of canvass she can carry. But, go you down, and don't be afraid ;" and he turned to give orders to his crew.

The ship sailed on with all the speed that she could command, but, though by no means a slow vessel, the pinnace gained perceptibly upon her, and the only hope was, that they might be enabled to reach the French coast before the English vessel actually came up with them.

In the meantime Arabella went down into the cabin, and leaning her head upon her hand, gave herself up to every sort of melancholy anticipation. The women servants, who had been sent to accompany her, were well nigh strangers to her ; and she had no one to whom she could venture to display all the sorrowful feelings of her heart. The only comfort that she felt was the

rippling sound of the waves, as the ship dashed through them ; but the hope of escape was faint, even though she felt that they were going with tremendous speed. Her spirit was one that had never through life indulged in sanguine expectations ; and with her brightest and most cheerful feelings there had always mingled a shade of melancholy, as if she were forewarned by some internal voice of the sad fate before her.

The rapid rate at which the vessel went, the eager cries of the persons in command, the plunging of the ship as she passed wave after wave, for several minutes, did indeed afford to the unfortunate lady some hope of reaching the coast which she had seen in the faint distance from the deck. But she was not permitted long to indulge in such anticipations.

The report of a cannon soon reached her ear ; another and another followed. Still, however, the ship sailed on, and no sounds from above but the mere word ^eof command, gave notice that the danger was increased. A pause ensued ; and then again the cannon were heard, she thought, more distinctly. Still no un usual

bustle displayed itself on deck, and one of her women, looking through the small window in the stern, remarked in a low voice, that the pinnace seemed more distant.

A moment after a single gun was fired, and though there had been some noise above previously, deep silence instantly succeeded. Immediately after a rattling sound and a heavy fall upon the deck was heard, followed by cries, and shouts, and exclamations, but the ship continued on her course, and one of the servants coming in, informed Arabella that a shot from the pinnace had struck the boat upon the deck, but had done no farther mischief.

“It would be better for them to strike,” she murmured. “What should I feel if any of them were killed on my account?—Better linger out my life in prison, than be the cause of bloodshed.”

“The captain says we shall get to Calais yet, lady,” replied the man.

“God send it,” she answered; and as she spoke, the guns of the pinnace were again heard.

The next instant the little vessel shook, as something struck her; and, tearing through the wood-work of the cabin and casting splinters far and wide, came a ball, which passed within a few feet of the lady, and entered a beam beyond her. Arabella did not start or shrink, for she had no fears for herself; but it seemed evident that the pursuers were drawing nearer, and she was terrified for her companions. Rapid steps now came down the ladder, and the captain of the ship ran in and gazed around.

“Go forward, lady,” he said; “go forward into that little room; you will be safer there. Come, every one lend a hand, and pile up some hammocks round the side.”

“Do you think you can out-sail them?” asked Arabella.

“I hope so, lady,” he replied; “at all events I will try.”

“Strike when you like,” said Arabella, “without considering me. I would not have you risk yourself and your men on my account.”

“Thank you, lady, thank you,” answered the seaman; “we will risk ourselves none the less

for what you say, and strike I will not till I am compelled, They have no right to fire at a ship of a friendly country, and our King will have vengeance for such conduct."

Thus saying, he left her; and though the guns of the pinnace were fired from time to time, no other event occurred for near a quarter of an hour, when a tremendous crash was heard. The little vessel heeled suddenly; and a rattling sound of falling timber and cordage showed that some of the masts or yards had been carried away. Three or four minutes elapsed, while all eyes in the cabin were fixed anxiously upon the door, and the rate of the ship visibly diminished.

At length the captain of the vessel entered with a sad and gloomy countenance: "It is no use, lady, to try it any longer," he said; "they have carried away our topmast; and we have no chance now. I have done the best for you that I could, but it is vain. Have I your consent to heave-to?"

"At once," answered Arabella; "do not let them fire at you again.—Make them some signal, my good friend.—Now for my prison again," she

murmured, as the captain left her. "I have never yet known hope, but to be disappointed—" and bending down her head, she pressed her handkerchief upon her eyes, while a low struggling sob or two, told that she was weeping, but strove to restrain her tears.

In a few minutes she had overcome her emotion, and wiping her eyes, sat calmly till the sound of many voices speaking on the deck, and at the side of the vessel, showed her that a boat from the pinnace was alongside. After a short pause, steps were again heard coming down, and an English gentleman appeared, completely armed, as was the custom of that age.

"The Lady Arabella Stuart?" he said, advancing into the cabin and gazing around.

"My name is Arabella Seymour, sir," answered the lady; "but I suppose you mean myself."

"I do, Madam," he replied; "and I regret to say, that my orders are to land you and convey you to London, as a prisoner. But before I do so, I must beg you to answer me truly, whether Mr. Seymour be on board?"

Arabella started, and looked up, with an expression of joy.

“He has escaped then !” she cried ; “he has escaped. Thank God, thank God !—Pardon me, Lord, for murmuring at thy will !—He has escaped, and I am happy.”

“Then I am to conclude, madam,” said the officer, “that he is not on board this ship ?”

“Most assuredly he is not,” replied Arabella ; “of that I pledge you my word.—I trust that by this time he is safe in France.”

“No one can tell, madam,” was the answer ; “he had escaped from the Tower ; but to escape from the country is another affair.”

The only bitter thing that Arabella probably ever said in her life, now rose to her lips. “I know it is,” she replied ; “it seems as if England had become one great prison.” And the chill which the officer’s words cast upon the hopes that she had entertained of her husband’s escape, depressed her more even than her own recapture.

The ship was immediately taken into port, but all things seemed now indifferent to her. Her mind, agitated by the past, uncertain at the present, apprehensive of the future, became bewildered and confused. She suffered those who were around her to do with her what they would ; and during that evening and the following day she appeared to be in a dream, painful and terrible, but indistinct and misty. Nor was it till she found herself passing the gloomy portals of the Tower, that she awakened to all the stern reality of her fate. Then she burst into tears again, and a cold shudder passed over her frame as she gazed around upon the grey walls which had witnessed the sorrows and the death of so many of her race.

The next morning early she was hurried before the Council, and subjected to all the anguish of public examination and reproof, which not even her gentleness could mitigate. But as she left the Council Chamber to return to her sad captivity in the Tower, some friendly heart afforded her the greatest alleviation that her grief could receive. In passing through the

mixed crowd that filled the corridor, one of the persons present, she could not distinguish whom, whispered in haste, "Mr. Seymour has arrived safe in France!"

Arabella started, and turned round; but, hurried on by those who guarded her, she was unable to see any familiar face among the crowd; and, uttering the words "Thank God!" she proceeded on her way.

On that one thought she pondered during the rest of the day, speaking little to any one, and taking little nourishment, but often repeating to herself, "He is safe!—Thank God, he is safe!"

Towards nightfall she was visited by the Lieutenant of the Tower, who came to inform her that the two servants who had been captured with her were to be removed, three others, a gentlewoman, a chambermaid, and a man, having been sent to attend upon her by the King.

Arabella smiled sadly. "He need not envy me, lieutenant," she said, "the poor comfort of seeing faces that I know. I shall have few consolations within these walls,—but one, indeed; and that he cannot take from me."

“And what is that, lady, may I ask?” said the lieutenant.

“My trust in God, sir,” replied Arabella; “there is justice and mercy above, if not below. —But pray let me see these people whom the King has sent; I must welcome my fellow-prisoners.”

“The man, madam,” answered the lieutenant, “tells me that he was in your service at Highgate; but as it has been proved that he had no hand in your escape, the King has restored him to you.”

“Oh, poor Cobham,” exclaimed Arabella; “I shall be glad to see him, though it is selfish, too, for he will have a dull life here.”

“I trust, lady,” replied the lieutenant, “that neither he nor you, will be long within these walls. The King will, I hope, be satisfied with submission, and set you at liberty ere long.”

“I must not doubt it, lieutenant,” said Arabella; “for that were to accuse him of injustice. I will try to make myself as cheerful under the infliction as may be. I have heard that you are kind to your prisoners, lieutenant,

and have to thank you for your treatment of one whom I love better than myself."

"I owe a large debt of gratitude to that gentleman's house," answered the officer, "and would gladly repay it, madam, by any courtesy to you, but I shall not have the opportunity, I fear.—To-morrow I am to be removed from my office, to make way for another; but he is a gentleman of good repute, and will, I trust, deal kindly with all under his care.—I will now send these people to you, lady, and take my leave, wishing you happier with all my heart."

Thus saying, he quitted the room; and, in a few minutes, the door again opened. Arabella raised her eyes, with as well contented a smile as she could assume, to welcome her old servant Cobham; but by the faint light that streamed through the high window, she saw another well known form; and starting up, with a look of joy she cast herself upon Ida Mara's neck, and then, overwhelmed with various emotions, burst into tears.

"Oh Ida, Ida," she cried; "this is relief indeed."

“Hush, dear lady,” whispered Ida Mara; “do not seem too glad to see me. Speak to Cobham and the girl. I will explain all, when they are gone.”

Arabella raised her head, and then saw that two of the King’s officers had followed the rest of the party.

“Ah, Cobham,” she said, turning to her old servant; “I am right glad to see you all once more;” and she held out her hand to him.

The man took and kissed it respectfully, saying aloud, “I would gladly see you anywhere but here, madam; and if you had told me what you were going to do, I would have taken care you should not be here at all.”

“No rebellious words, sirrah,” said one of the officers; “I will report them to the King.”

“You may report what you like,” replied the man, bluntly.

But Arabella interposed, exclaiming, “Hush! hush! I beseech you, sir, refrain; if you have any of the feelings of a gentleman you will not think of repeating where it may do harm, the expression of a faithful servant’s attachment to his unhappy mistress. Jane, I am glad to see you.”

The girl replied, with a discontented look, merely saying that she hoped her mistress was well, and then retired with Cobham and the King's officers to the rooms appropriated to the servants of the Lady Arabella, which were contiguous to her own.

"Alas ! dear lady," said Ida Mara, as soon as they were gone. "Alas ! to find you here ! How eagerly did I watch and inquire for any tidings respecting you ; and then, when I heard that you were taken, I trembled lest they should debar me from seeing you."

"But how came they to send you ?" asked Arabella ; "it is indeed an act of favour which I did not expect."

"Why, lady, the King has deceived himself entirely respecting me," replied the fair Italian. "It is his own doing ; for I said not one word to mislead him, though I took good care not to contradict him."

"You were wise," said Arabella ; "he is not one to bear opposition. But how came it about, my Ida ?"

Ida then related to the lady, all that the reader already knows concerning the events which happened to her, after quitting Mr. Conyers' house at Highgate.

“What was their object?” she said, “in taking me away I have no precise means of knowing; but I am sure I saw that dreadful man's face for a moment; and having once vowed revenge against me, I am certain that he will not fail to seek it whenever the opportunity occurs. I believed he was dead, till within the last week; for I had not seen him before for several years. But I do not think I can deceive myself now, and though the hair and beard is black instead of grey, the features are the same. But I will not dwell upon that, dear lady; the King cheated himself, as I have told you. He thought I had been carried away by order of your friends, because you could not place confidence in me; and to-day he sent for me, to ask if I would return to attend upon you while you are a prisoner in the Tower. I took care not to seem too ready, saying that I did not like imprisonment, nor the Tower for a residence; but that if it were his Majesty's

wish, I was ready to obey him implicitly. Thereupon he praised my submission, and assured me that I should have as much liberty as possible while here. He knew not how gladly my heart beat to have permission to come. If he had, I think he would have forbidden it."

"And can you really find joy, *Ida*?" asked the lady, "in sharing a prison with me?—Who can tell, my poor girl, how long it may last? Who can tell that I may not here end my days?"

"Oh, Heaven forbid," cried *Ida Mara*; "we will soften these stones first with our tears."

"Alas!" replied *Arabella*, "I fear that we shall not ever be able to soften the heart of the King, by any tears that we may shed. But at all events your being with me will be an alleviation of my sorrow."

"Perhaps you may be able to escape, lady," rejoined *Ida Mara*.

"No, *Ida*; no," answered *Arabella*; "I will not try. The net is around me, and it is of no use to flap my wings. On the contrary, I will make a voluntary promise not to escape, if they will give me the full range of my cage; and then,

like many another poor bird, I will sit and sing my life away between the bars. I only grieve to think that for my sake, you should be doomed to the same hard fate."

Ida Mara kissed the Lady's hand, and gazed in her face, with a look of deep sadness; but she only replied, "You forget, madam, that imprisonment to me, is not what it is to you. I have nothing in the world without to sigh for. Oh, that they would but keep me and let you go!"

Arabella answered her by tears.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEVER did human being in a world of woe strive with more patient perseverance for contentment with his lot than did poor Arabella Seymour. She called to her aid all the resources of a humble and a faithful spirit. She trusted in God, she resigned herself to his will, she tried to bear the chastening hand with cheerfulness ; but it was in vain she did so. Hours, days, weeks passed,—the heavy hours, days, weeks, of imprisonment, without one hope coming to lighten the burden or assuage the pangs.

At first, she consoled herself with the knowledge that Seymour was safe beyond the power of the vain tyrant who kept her within those walls ; but she soon found that even that consolation, when she indulged in it, produced an evil effect upon her mind. The thought that he was secure

and free, brought with it the eager yearnings of a warm and affectionate heart to be with him, to rest upon the bosom of him she loved, to hear the music of his voice, to see his eyes beaming upon her with tenderness and devotion.

She dared not trust herself with such meditations, for they were dangerous to her tranquillity, and were sure to end in long and bitter weeping. Then she strove to extract hope from some fruitless effort to soften the cold and obdurate heart of the King,—as the alchymists of the day attempted to draw gold from lead or iron. But yet, even in the act, she knew it to be idle. She would gaze upon the letter she had written, beseeching this person or that, who was supposed to have influence over James, to intercede for her; and with a sad smile shake her head and sigh, exclaiming, “Vain, vain! it is all in vain!”

Then she would wander round the walls of the Tower, gaze on the busy multitudes swarming freely without, picture to herself their thoughts, feelings, and occupations; trace them, in her imagination, through their daily la-

bour, and follow them back again to the home of domestic love: and the tears would rise in her eyes, as she thought that no such home was ever to be hers.

Or, at other times, she would turn towards the river with its shipping, and mark the light boats gliding over the waters, and long — oh, with what a thirsty longing! — to pursue the course of that stream once more, and over the wide sea, to find the free happiness denied her there: and when she looked around on bars, and gates, and guards, her heart would feel chilled and crushed; and again her tears would rise, and drop upon the stones of the wall.

Often, when such was the case, some words, which had been used by *Ida Mara*, came back to her mind; and she would ponder on them, and turn them in her imagination a thousand ways; for sadness ever will sport with fancy, and misery often dances in her chains.

One day, as she was sitting in her chamber, with the fair Italian beside her singing to her, she wrote from time to time a word or two on some paper which lay upon the table; and when

the girl's song was done, she said, "Give me your instrument, Ida; I will sing you a song now;" and placing the paper upright before her, she proceeded to pour forth, to a simple air of the time, the lines she had just written.

SONG.

"Ye gloomy walls, that circling round,
Oppress this form of clay,
When shall my spirit spurn the bound
Harsh men around it lay?
Oh! were there power in tears
Shed through unnumbered years
To soften the hard stone,
Long ere this weary day,
Melting like snow away,
Ye to the dust had gone.

"Lo! wreathing round your hoary towers,
Those who lie cold beneath,
Entwine a coronal of flowers
And honour you in death.
Though, were there power in tears
Dropp'd through unnumbered years
To soften the hard stone,
The torrents that the dead
Within these walls have shed,
Had of those towers left none!

"But all in vain, my heart would fly.
Wide o'er the land and wave,
To scenes of life and liberty
From this, its prison grave.

No ! there 's no power in tears
Shed through unnumbered years
 To soften the hard stone.
Else, would I weep all day,
And cease, only to pray,
 Till ye to dust were gone.

“ But colder than these iron walls,
 Hardest of earthly things,
Is that which dwells in courtly halls
 Within the breast of kings.
Though there were power in tears,
Shed through unnumbered years,
 To soften the hard stone,
There, fruitless would they prove !
Grief has no power to move
 The heart of man alone.”

“ Now run away, Ida, and fetch me a book,”
said Arabella ; “ I must not let such thoughts
stir within me any more : they render me dis-
contented, dear girl ; and they say, a contented
heart makes a garden of a wilderness.”

“ Ay, dear lady,” answered Ida Mara, with
a sigh ; “ but it is hard work first plucking up
the thorns. You have no books but those you
have read often ;—which shall I bring you ? ”

“ Run to Sir Gervase Elways,” said Ara-
bella, “ and ask him to lend me something
new. He is a learned man, and very complai-

sant, and I know amuses the tediousness of his charge with much reading. A blessing on those who write for us ! How many a heavy heart is lightened by reading the tales of other men's endurance ; how many a sick bed is smoothed by the light hand of gentle poetry ! Good faith, Ida—as it must be for one or the other—I would rather weep for the gone-by sorrows of other people, than for my own, too truly present."

Ida Mara left her mistress to obey ; but, in a moment after, she came back pale and trembling.

"What is the matter, Ida ? what is the matter ?" cried the lady, starting up.

"Ah, madam !" answered the girl, "I have just seen that terrible man, Weston, tripping across to the Bell-tower, where poor Sir Thomas Overbury is confined, and I shall now live in constant dread."

"Did he see you ?" asked Arabella.

"I think not — I hope not," replied Ida Mara. "I was under the arch below, and he was going the other way, dressed in black velvet, with soft steps, like a cat creeping up to a bird."

Arabella mused. "Call Jane hither," she said. And when the girl appeared, she added, "Go to the warder opposite there, and ask him the name of the gentleman dressed in black velvet, who just now crossed to the Bell-tower."

The girl retired without any answer; for she was of a somewhat sullen disposition, and discontented at being kept so long in the Tower. She returned in a few minutes, saying, "His name is Doctor Foreman, my lady; and he has gone, by the King's order, to visit Sir Thomas Overbury, who is sick."

Ida cast down her eyes thoughtfully on the ground; and Arabella, after giving the maid a sign that she might retire, murmured, "Doctor Foreman!—why, that is the man of whom there was so much talk at the Court, a sort of wizard, a conjuror, and a cheat,—suspected, too, of dealing in poisons. I heard the Queen say, his Majesty would have him hanged.—Can he be sent to Sir Thomas Overbury by the King?"

"Oh, lady, lady," cried Ida Mara, "it is the same man. Whatever name he may now call himself by, that is Weston. And I will tell

you," she added, kneeling on the cushion at the lady's feet, "I will tell you now what it was he wished me to do, that made me fly from him in such terror, which I have never told you before. He wished me to go to a young nobleman of the Court, who had been pleased with my music, to live with him for a time in sin, and then—" She paused, and sunk her voice to a whisper, adding, "and then—to put poison in his drink."

Arabella shuddered: "Good heaven!" she cried, "is it possible that such iniquity should live and prosper?—But why did you not accuse him, and bring him to punishment, Ida?"

"Because I had no proof," replied the girl: "at first I fled from him in terror and consternation, knowing that if I did not do as he required, after he had put his secret in my power, he would poison me; and then when good Sir Harry West delivered me from him, I reflected, and saw that, to bring such a charge, might but call down destruction on my own head. I was but a poor Italian girl, an alien, a stranger, with no one to speak for me, nothing to corro-

borate what I said. He had taken care to give me no proof against him ; there was but my word against his ; and I knew he was supported by many great men, who were more or less in his power, from secrets that they dared not see divulged.—What could I do, lady ?”

“ You did right, you did right, dear Ida,” answered Arabella : “ but I fear much that even now, he goes to Sir Thomas Overbury for no good. I will not believe that the King has sent him ; or, if so, the King is but a tool in the hands of others. This poor knight has many enemies, I fear. Is there no means of warning him against so dangerous a physician ?”

“ Perhaps there may be,” answered Ida Mara ; “ for though there is a guard at each end of the walk on the top of the wall, to prevent his passing farther on either side than for mere air and exercise, yet they have never stopped me as I have passed that way ; and one day I saw his door open.”

“ Did you ever meet him ?” asked Arabella.

“ No, never,” replied Ida Mara ; “ but I hear he is ill now, and confined to his bed.”

“Alas!” said Arabella, “who can tell how that illness has been brought about? There were suspicions abroad from the very first. Men discovered that Rochester, instead of being his friend, was his enemy; and there is not such a rancorous hatred on this earth, Ida, as that which dwells in the breast of the ungrateful. This poor man’s imprisonment, is a living reproach to the King’s favourite; and I have many, many doubts.”

“I shall not dare to turn my steps that way again,” said Ida Mara, “lest I should meet that dreadful man. The very sight of him seems to curdle my whole blood, and makes my heart labour as if it would not beat.”

Arabella remained in thought for a few minutes, and then said, “I will go myself, Ida; he must be warned, if possible.”

“Nay, lady, nay,” answered Ida Mara; “I meant not to say that; I will go. We shall soon see him pass back, and then it will be safe.” As she spoke, she approached the window and looked out, keeping herself, however, behind the stonework of the wall.

Arabella followed her, standing somewhat more forward and gazing down into the open space below. They remained thus, however, for nearly a quarter of an hour, without seeing any one but an occasional labourer, and a party of the guard, proceeding towards the outer gates.

At length, Arabella cried, "Here is some one now, Ida;" and the girl, leaning her head a little forward, exclaimed, "That is he, that is he!" drawing back instantly from the window with a shudder.

Arabella watched him as he crossed towards the gate. "'Tis strange," she said, "I can discover in his appearance none of those deadly signs you speak of. To me, he would seem but that pitiful thing, a vain old coxcomb, affecting the air and step of youth, dressed in the butterfly finery of early thoughtlessness, and banishing the comely gravity of years. He trips along like some Court dancing master, fancying himself a treasury of graces, which he bestows as a bounty on less gifted men. But he is gone, Ida. Now we will set out together. Nay, I will go with you; for if you are afraid of his company, I am afraid of

my solitude. Sometimes, when I am alone, I think I shall go mad."

In execution of their design, the lady and her attendant went out and walked slowly along the wall, towards the tower in which the unhappy Overbury was confined. But the orders of the guard were by this time changed; and the man at the angle nearest to the knight's prison, dropped his partizan, saying, "You cannot pass here, ladies, unless you give the countersign."

"That we are not able to do," answered Arabella, pausing; "we are not soldiers, my good sir, to take the fortress by surprise; and I think they never furnish us, poor women, with signs or countersigns."

"You cannot pass here, madam, without," replied the man, bluffly; "there are new orders given for the custody of the close prisoners; so you must take your walk another way."

Arabella turned sadly back towards her room. But while she did so, we must pursue, for a short time, the course of the dark and infamous villain, who had just left the chamber of Sir Thomas

Overbury. Although his step was as light as air, and debonair as ever, Doctor Foreman did not feel altogether well satisfied and at ease.

“The man suspects something,” he said, speaking evidently of Overbury; “and I doubt this new lieutenant does his duty well.”

What the duty was, which he spoke of, would not be difficult to say, for the most corrupt hearts apply to their own purposes, however dark and horrible they may be, the highest and the holiest terms; and the reluctant apprehension which, it would seem, Sir Gervase always felt in yielding himself to the criminal designs of his patrons, was construed by their less scrupulous accomplices into a lack of due devotion to their cause.

“That girl too,” continued the Charlatan to himself, pursuing his way; “she must be provided for. She would make a cruel witness against one, if any thing were to come out. Weston’s the man, however.—My boy Dick has no scruples; he can settle both affairs at once; but he must have full power, and not be always hampered by this knave of a lieutenant. I must see, my lord of Rochester, and get his authority, otherwise we

shall make no progress. To-morrow, I hear, is to be his wedding-day with our fair Countess, so he will be in good humour."

Such reveries brought him to the water side, and calling one of the wherries, which were, perhaps, more plentiful upon the Thames in those days than in our own, he made the boatman conduct him at once to Whitehall.

On his visit to Rochester, however, we will not pause, reluctant to dwell upon scenes of such depravity one moment more than is absolutely necessary to the history that we tell. It is well known that strict orders were given to the lieutenant of the Tower to admit, without restriction, the persons selected for the execution of the designs against the unhappy prisoner. Armed with these, Foreman returned to hold a conference, in which he expected to encounter no obstacles; but on that point he was somewhat disappointed.

The door of his house was opened for him by the little page, whom we have seen on a former occasion carrying his sword; and in his anteroom above he found the man, Weston, who had been engaged in carrying off *Ida Mara* from Highgate.

He was dressed as a servant, though in somewhat gay attire ; but his face was sullen and downcast ; and, when his worthy master told him to follow him into an inner chamber, he obeyed slowly and without reply.

“ Now, Weston,” cried Doctor Foreman, seating himself, “ I have got a great and important affair for you.”

“ I won’t undertake it,” replied the man.

“ Won’t undertake it ?” repeated Foreman, with every mark of surprise. “ What do you mean ?”

“ I mean,” he said ; “ that I will not undertake any great affair, unless I am to be better rewarded than I was for the last.”

“ But you were not successful,” said the doctor ; “ all people are paid according to their success.”

“ I won’t be paid so,” rejoined Weston ; “ I run the same risk, whether I am successful or not, and so I have a right to the same recompense ; and I will have it before-hand too. I will trust to no man.”

“ There you are right,” replied Weston ; “ and

you shall have it before-hand ; nor will it be a trifle, I can tell you ; for what you have to do will make a great man of you. To set out with, the gentleman who employs me, will give you a hundred nobles."

"Come, this is speaking reason," cried Weston, rubbing his hands ; "let us hear what is to be done. For a hundred nobles, I will go a good way."

"The affair is very easy," answered Foreman, well pleased to bring him so easily to compliance. "I am about to place you in the service of poor Sir Thomas Overbury, who is a close prisoner in the Tower, you know. No one will be admitted to him but yourself ; and, as he is very ill, you must be careful of him. Particularly, you must remark that, as I am his physician, he is to take nothing but what I send him. You must even, perhaps, cook his food for him ; for there are sick people, you know, who will eat things that are hurtful to them."

"I understand, I understand," said Weston, with a nod of the head ; "is there anything more ?"

“Nothing,” answered Foreman ; “ unless you like, by way of amusing yourself, to be very civil to the pretty lady you carried off from Highgate, who is there in the Tower, attending upon the Lady Arabella. You may ask her to take a glass of wine with you ; and I will give you some glasses with twisted stalks, very beautiful to see, which I brought from Venice.”

“ Anything more ?” asked the man, in a tone that Dr. Foreman did not altogether like.

“ No,” he replied ; “ no ; you will have quite enough to do, to effect this properly, though my Lord of Rochester will furnish you with sufficient powers, to prevent much trouble about it.”

“ Well,” replied Weston ; “ I understand you then completely ; but to be sure that I make no mistake, in consequence of delicate phrases, I had better repeat the whole in plain English.”

“ It may be as well,” said Docter Foreman, with a nod.

“ Thus it is, then,” answered Weston ; “ I am to go into the service of Sir Thomas Overbury in the Tower, to have him quite in my own

hands, and to give him the poison that you give me for him?" (Doctor Foreman nodded.) "Then I am to make friends with the girl, and poison her too?" (Doctor Foreman nodded again.) And Weston proceeded: "And for all this I am to have a hundred nobles.—Come, come, dear doctor, its time we should understand each other. Very likely, if I were but a common servant, such pay might be considered handsome. But people tell me you are my papa."

"There may be some truth in that," said Foreman, with a grin.

"Well then," rejoined Weston; "you would not have your dear son put his neck in jeopardy for a hundred nobles?"

"I have often put mine in jeopardy for a less sum," answered Foreman; "before I made the large fortune that I have made, and which I have left to you at my death, if you behave well, Dick. I wish you to work your way up, as I have worked mine: and as you are a shrewd youth, with all the money that you will have from me, you may go much farther than I have gone."

“ I may go to the gallows, perhaps,” replied Weston.

“ Pooh, nonsense,” answered his worthy father, “ if you go to the gallows, the Lord Rochester and the Countess of Essex must go first ; and the King would sooner go himself.”

“ Ay, that is a different affair,” cried Weston. “ But have you really left me all you have got ? for of course that must be a consideration.”

“ You shall see the will yourself,” replied the learned doctor ; and, opening a strong box, he took out a parchment from amongst several others, and placed it in the hands of his worshipful son.

The younger man ran his eyes over it with a look of vast satisfaction. “ That ’s enough,” he said ; “ that ’s enough. I ’ll do anything you like. Give me the powders.”

“ Nay,” answered Foreman, taking down a bottle from one of the shelves, and pouring a small quantity of the liquor it contained into a phial, “ you must give this to Sir Thomas Overbury, by a spoonful at a time. Then, as for the girl, here is this powder. If you can ever

get her to eat or drink in your presence, you have nothing to do, but to hold the contents between your finger and thumb—so—and drop it upon her food, or into her cup. It will dissolve instantly; and in half-an-hour she will be in Heaven.—Sudden deaths will happen, who can help it?”

“Nobody, to be sure,” answered the young man, laughing; “but I don’t see why you should wish her out of the way.”

“Oh, I have good reasons; I have good reasons,” said Foreman, nodding his head significantly.

“Ah, well; it’s no business of mine,” cried Weston; “I’ll do the business! Give me the drugs.”

Foreman delivered them into his hands; then added several directions as to his conduct, and furnished him with a letter from Lord Rochester to the lieutenant of the Tower.

To secure all, the hundred nobles were bestowed at once; and Weston departed from the room to make ready for his expedition. But the first thought that crossed his mind was, “No, no! Overbury if you like; but the girl

is safe. This powder I'll keep for another occasion ; and if you play me false, old gentleman, look to yourself."

With this hint of his very filial intentions, he secured the drugs in the heart of a bundle of clothes, and set out upon his errand with as much alacrity as if he was going to a wedding feast.

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE had been a good deal of bustle and confusion in the Tower during the morning, three days after the events which we have related in the last chapter. Two persons, bearing the appearance of physicians, had crossed from the gate to the tower in which Overbury was imprisoned, and visited him, in company with the lieutenant, while from the window of the Lady Arabella's chamber, might be seen a group, consisting of the notorious Doctor Foreman, Weston, and another man, conversing together eagerly, and evidently waiting, till the personages who had been admitted to their victim returned.

The physicians' soon passed by the spot where they stood, without taking any other notice of them than by a contemptuous look, which the younger of the two bestowed upon Foreman; and immediately after Sir Gervase Elways joined

their evil council, and remained in conversation with them nearly half an hour.

After the consultation was concluded, Foreman quitted the Tower; and the rest of the party separated. Silence and solitude then took possession of the walls and courts around; and during the rest of the day, it was remarked that an unusual degree of stillness prevailed in that part of the fortress, few, if any persons, being seen moving about, and the only noises heard being those which rose from Tower Hill and the streets adjacent.

In the meanwhile, since the day that we last spoke of, Arabella had fallen into a state of deeper despondency than ever. Her efforts for cheerfulness were all vain; and she sat for hours gazing listlessly out of the window, with the tears rising from time to time in her eyes, indicating the sad thoughts that were busy at her heart. It was to no purpose that Ida Mara strove by every means in her power to engage her mind with other things than her own hard fate. Books had lost their charm for her; music seemed but to increase her grief; and, though once or twice she tried to

converse, she soon lost herself in reveries again, from which it was difficult to rouse her.

“ Leave me, Ida, leave me,” she said at length, as evening was beginning to fall ; “ my heart is very heavy, and it is vain to try to lighten it. You have stayed within with me all day, dear girl ; go out and breathe the fresh air now. A walk round the walls will do you good.”

“ I do not like to leave you so sad,” replied Ida Mara ; “ I wish you would come with me. I am sure it were better for you than sitting here alone.”

“ I will, I will presently,” replied Arabella. “ Come back in half-an-hour, dear Ida, and I will go with you.—But leave me now.”

Ida Mara saw that it was in vain to press her farther at that moment, and leaving her, rambled through the vacant courts, and round the wide wall of the Tower, meeting with few of its inhabitants ; till, on her return, in one of the narrow passages, she suddenly found herself face to face with one of the men who had carried her off from Highgate. He had evidently been drinking

largely, and she made an effort to pass him at once, hoping that he might not notice her.

He stopped her, however, though not uncivilly, saying, "Ah, pretty lady, is that you? I am glad to see you here; for I once did you some wrong; and I don't intend to do so any more, whatsoever they may say.—You forgive me, pretty lady, don't you?"

The man, though not drunk, was not quite sober, and Ida Mara was somewhat alarmed.

"Oh yes, I forgive you freely," she replied; "but I must go on; for the Lady Arabella expects me."

"Nay, stop a bit," said Weston; "we are old acquaintances, you know. I am Sir Thomas Overbury's servant now; but I shan't be long, I think."

Ida listened eagerly. "Poor man, he is very ill, I hear," she replied.

"Ay, that he is," answered Weston, "but he is a devilish long time about it. He's too cunning to give up life easily; and so he makes a hard struggle against death."

“Who would not?” said Ida Mara with a shudder, for she put her own interpretation on the man’s words. “Pray what is his complaint?”

“Nay, I know not,” answered Weston; “a multitude, I believe. He makes nothing but complaints from morning till night. He’ll be more at ease when he’s gone.”

“As many others will,” answered Ida Mara.

“Ay, ay,” rejoined Weston, with a stupid look, “but you need not be afraid.—I’ll keep that for myself. I may have need of it.”

Ida Mara did not comprehend what he meant; but she was interested in the fate of Sir Thomas Overbury; and, knowing that her lady would entertain the same feelings, she said, as the man seemed rather loquacious in his wine, “Poor Sir Thomas is very strictly confined, I believe. The guards will let no one pass even near his door?”

“Oh, the guards are gone now,” replied Weston. “They are not much wanted. Nobody sees him but myself and Franklyn; and we have admission at all hours.”

“ Then he is so weak, I suppose,” observed Ida Mara, “ that he cannot stir from his bed, so that escape is impossible ?”

“ He might as well try to escape from his grave,” rejoined the other ; “ and yet he lingers long.”

“ Well, I must go on now,” said Ida ; “ good night, sir, good night.”

“ Good night,” answered Weston. “ I don’t suppose I shall see you in the Tower again, pretty lady ; for at nine I bring his supper to him, and that is the last meal he will eat, I fancy.”

Thus saying, he suffered the fair Italian to pass, and walked on his own way.

Arabella was sitting in the same spot where Ida Mara left her, with the last faint rays of day streaming in from the window, upon that face once so beautiful, but now faded and worn with the anguish of the heart, so that those who had loved her best would hardly have known her. Her eyes were red with weeping ; but the tears had been wiped away ; and when Ida entered, she turned round and tried to smile.

“ Well,” she said, “ what hast thou seen, dear

friend? Come, sit you down beside me, Ida. I shall not go out to night, though the moon, peeping up there, seems to ask me to come forth under her melancholy light, which is but too like the complexion of my own thoughts, where the only brightness is the reflection from a star that has set."

"I have met with something worth telling, lady," replied Ida Mara; "it is not often one does so within these walls." And taking a seat beside Arabella, according to her orders, she began, and in a low voice recounted all that had occurred. Her tone was soft and quiet; but there was an earnest sadness in her manner, which seemed to imply, that she attached more importance to the conversation she recapitulated, than the mere words would justify. When she had told all, she dropped her voice still further, and added, "He is dying, lady, that is clear; and, I fear much, by poison!"

"Alas! alas!" said Arabella, "this is a terrible fate; and if he had faults, as doubtless he had, they have been punished direfully. Oh, Ida, Ida! what a horrible thing! To die in

a gloomy prison, debarred the support of kindred faces round one, or the comfort of the voices that we love, or the touch of the hand of affection, or the consolation of a good man's prayer ; with assassins to tend our bed of death, and the eyes that hate us gazing on our agony. Oh, Ida ! it is too terrible ;—I will go to him,—a woman, a Christian, I cannot stay here, and leave him to expire without any one to pity, or any one to help. I must go to him, Ida. You say that the guards are gone ; perhaps the doors may be locked, but still I can speak to him through the window. I can tell him that I grieve for him. I can bid him look to God, to his Saviour, to atonement, to redemption—to a world where the sorrows of this earth shall find compensation at last."

Her words were somewhat wild, and her manner unusually vehement ; but though Ida feared that Arabella might witness a scene which would only tend to agitate and depress her still farther, she did not like to remonstrate.

" I am ready, lady," she replied ; " what shall I bring you ?"

“Nothing but a veil,” answered Arabella ;
“my temples burn, the cool air will refresh me.
Put on the black mantle, Ida, and draw the
hood over your head, then no one will see us
as we glide along the walls ; or if they do, they
will take us for the spectres of some who have
been here murdered. How many ! Oh God,
how many !”

Ida obeyed her directions, and then issuing forth, but without passing through the room in which the servants sat, they walked with slow and silent steps towards the tower, in which Sir Thomas Overbury was lingering out the last few hours of his miserable captivity. All was silent and still. The sun was now fully set ; the gibbous moon, a few days short of her full, just shone over the parapet ; the night was cool, but clear, without a breath of air stirring in the heaven ; the murmur of the great city rose up around, like the sound of distant waters rolling over a pebbly bed ; and a red star, shining near the earth’s bright satellite, looked rather like an angry rival of the queen of night, than her soft attendant train-bearer.

Stealing quietly on, Arabella and her companion reached the tower, where the poor captive lay, entered the open gateway which led to the stairs, and tried the door on the right hand, which they knew to be that of the sick man's chamber. It was locked, however.

"We must go to the window," said Arabella in a low voice ; and issuing forth again, she walked round to a small loop-hole, at the height of about four feet from the ground, the casement of which she found open.

"Keep where you can see if any one comes, Ida," said Arabella ; and approaching close to the window, she looked in.

A lamp was standing on the table, shedding its faint and sickly light around the narrow chamber in the tower ; and a pale, emaciated form lay stretched upon a pallet close beneath the lady's eyes, as she looked through the loop-hole. Beside him, on a stool, was a cup containing some liquid, and a book ; but the fluid had not been tasted, and he seemed but little in a condition to read. Every feature of the sick man's face betokened pain ; his eyes were turned towards the

rafters over head, his knees drawn up, his right arm under his head; and the thin fingers of his hand grasping the pillow, as if in bitter agony. A moan burst from his lips as Arabella watched him, and, without farther pause, she said in a low but distinct voice, "Sir Thomas—Sir Thomas Overbury!"

The unhappy man started up and looked round the room with faint and weary eyes, but could see no one.

"Who is that?" he asked, turning his face at length towards the window; "some one called me. Whose face is that? I cannot see the features."

"It is I," answered the lady. "It is I, a friend, Sir Thomas."

"A friend?" said Overbury, with a woful shake of the head. "God help us!—Is there such a thing?"

"It is Arabella Seymour," replied the lady; "once Arabella Stuart, and she comes to comfort you, as far as a weak fellow captive can."

"Ah, lady, lady," exclaimed Overbury, "does one whose misery I myself have wrought, come

now to comfort me, and generously call herself my friend ?”

“ Yes, Sir Thomas,” answered Arabella ; “ and I beseech you remember, that not only a poor fallible creature like yourself, but the God whom we have offended, the Saviour whom we crucified, comes likewise to the sick bed of every sinner, calls himself his friend, and offers comfort, hope, and consolation, if we will but accept it.”

“ Lady, I have been trying to think of such things,” replied the dying man, “ I have been trying to turn my thoughts to my Saviour ; but I am tormented by fiends in human shape, that give me no rest.—Lady, I am dying of poison. For weeks I have taken nothing ~~that~~ is not drugged. My food, my drink, the very salt,* which, once given by the wild Arab, secures his bitterest enemy from his vengeance, is mingled with deadly minerals.”

“ Alas, alas !” cried Arabella, with the tears rising in her eyes, “ how can I help you ?”

* It was discovered afterwards that his salt was mingled daily with white precipitate.

“No way,” he replied. “God has withdrawn his countenance from me, perhaps to restore it when purified hereafter; but in this world there is no more hope. Would it were over; for I am in torture. Not a limb, not a muscle is sound; and yet I will not make myself their instrument,—I will not take more of anything they give me, than is absolutely needful for the bare support of life.”

“I can bring you food,” exclaimed Arabella, eagerly; “the guards are now away.—Through this window I can supply you every night.”

“Oh, blessings on you,” cried the wretched man. “You are an angel, indeed.”

Just as he spoke, Ida Mara ran up to Arabella, exclaiming, “Crouch down, crouch down, lady! Here are two men coming with a light. They will not see us in that corner.”

Bending down in the angle of the wall, and covered by the deep shadow that it cast, Arabella and the fair Italian waited in the belief that the men would pass. But though their steps were soon heard coming, the sound ceased when they reached the gate of the tower, and the moment

after voices were distinguished speaking in the chamber of Sir Thomas Overbury.

The first words did not clearly reach the ear of those without ; but Arabella crept somewhat nearer to the window, and then she heard the unfortunate man reply, " I will not take anything.—I do not want it."

" Ay, but you must take some supper, or a little wine at least," said a rough voice.

" No, I will not," he answered shortly. " I know your horrible devices. I will take no more from your hands, I would rather die of starvation. Put the supper down there ; and when you are gone, I will cut from the heart of the meat, which you cannot poison, sufficient to support life. I have an antidote, too, that you know not of, which will make what I do eat sure. But I will take nothing while you are here. The very sight of such fiends destroys me."

" Come, come," said another voice, " this is all nonsense, Sir Thomas. Take some wine, or I will pour it down your throat. You will die of hunger ; and then men will say that we have poisoned you."

“They will speak but too truly,” cried Overbury; “Get you hence, get you hence! I will drink nothing.”

After these words came a low murmuring for several minutes, as if two persons were speaking together in an under tone; and, unable to refrain any longer, Arabella raised her head and looked in.

The two men, Weston and Franklyn, who had been appointed to attend upon Sir Thomas Overbury in prison, were standing together near the table, apparently in consultation, with their heads close together, and far too eager in the dreadful occupation which they had undertaken to notice at the dark window, the face gazing at them from without. At length, the former approached the bedside of the prisoner, while the other went round towards the head of the couch, saying, in a civil tone, “I wish you would take something, Sir Thomas.”

“I will not,” cried the unhappy man. “What are you doing there?” he added.

“Only smoothing your bolster,” replied the villain; but at the same instant he snatched the

pillow from beneath the dying man's head, and cast it upon his face. The other murderer threw himself upon it, while Weston held it tightly down; and, with a loud and piercing scream, Arabella clasped her hands together, and darted away along the wall, crying, "Murder! murder!"

Ida Mara followed her as fast as possible, but she was not yet concealed by the buildings, when one of the men looked out. He instantly ran back, pale and trembling, and whispered to his companion, who was still holding the pillow tightly down over the face of their victim, "He is gone; you may take it off—I have seen his spirit!"

Weston gazed at him with wild and haggard eyes for a moment, and then removed the pillow. A slight convulsion passed across Overbury's countenance, and then all was still.

CHAPTER XV.

IDA MARA sat by the bedside of Arabella during the whole of that night, and a sad and terrible night it was. Her mind, agitated and worn with her own cares, had given way at the terrible sight which she had witnessed. The dark deed haunted her imagination ; the forms of the murderers still appeared before her eyes ; she heard their voices ringing in her ears ; the last look of their wretched victim, before they extinguished the lingering spark of life for ever, remained present to her remembrance, hanging like a terrible picture before her, and her thoughts and words were all confused and wild.

Ida Mara hoped and trusted that time would remove such horrible images, and restore the sweet being she so dearly loved, to tranquillity and reason. But day went by after day, and

although some slight amendment was perceptible, Arabella's mind never recovered its tone. At times, indeed, she would be quite collected and calm ; would speak, and reason, and lament, and weep over her fate, as she had been accustomed to do before. But often, even in the midst of her most quiet conversation, when no subject of a painful or exciting nature engaged her thoughts, she would suddenly seem to lose herself ; her words would become rambling and unconnected ; and she would pause and put her hand to her head, as if she felt that all was not right there, ending with a long deep fit of silence, afraid to speak, lest what she uttered should be incoherent.

At other times, again, her mind would be quite astray ; she would fancy she saw strange faces, and heard dying groans ; she would think that she herself was to be murdered, and would cling to Ida in terror grievous to behold.

Then she would talk of former days ; of him she loved ; of their first hours of affection ; she would fancy that he was gone upon some embassy to a foreign Court, and would return speedily ;

and she would sit and sing the songs of peace and joy till Ida wept at the contrast between such wild but happy dreams of a disordered intellect, and the sad and stern realities of that sweet lady's fate. All these various changes, however, exhausted her strength and wore her frame ; and even in the lucid intervals, when her mind was completely itself, the gloomy sense of her wretchedness undermined her health and wrought a sad change in her appearance.

At these times she would often talk of the events of that dark and terrible night when the designs against Overbury's life were consummated ; and though at first Ida strove to direct her attention to some less horrible subject, she soon found it was in vain, and, on the contrary, endeavoured to lead Arabella to discuss it quietly and reasonably, in the hope that by regulating her thoughts upon that point her mind might be restored to its tone.

Some indulgence was now shown to the poor captive ; and though she was only permitted to see her fellow-prisoner and kinswoman, Lady Shrewsbury, upon one or two occasions, yet other

friends from without were frequently admitted to visit her, and two of the King's physicians were instructed to watch over her health.

The greatest comfort, however, that Arabella received, was, when some post from France brought her messages from her husband, full of that deep and tender affection which he never ceased to entertain for her to the last hour of his life. She found that he generally hovered about in the neighbourhood of the coast, still hoping, still praying, that he might be permitted to rejoin her, and pass the rest of his days in wiping the tears from her eyes, and blotting out sorrow in happiness.

Those hopes and prayers were daily disappointed; but still they were a comfort to his mind; and once or twice, when a letter, in his own hand, was secretly introduced into the Tower, by some of those who visited the lady, it would produce a great and manifest change. Though it generally made her weep at first, she would become more cheerful and more resigned, and often sitting down, would write an eloquent appeal to the King, or to his ministers, trying to

excite in them some sense of justice and of compassion.

Sometimes, when news from Seymour had been delayed for a longer period than usual, she would send Ida Mara forth—for which permission could generally be obtained from the lieutenant—to seek for intelligence at the house of any one who was likely to receive communications from France.

Generally these visits were to the Court of England, or to persons in the City of London ; but occasionally Ida was sent to different members of the lady's own family, or of Seymour's, in order to obtain some tidings, even though the persons she sought lived at some distance from London. When this was the case, Arabella, who never forgot, even when her intellect wandered most wildly, to think of the comfort and safety of others, sent her old and faithful servant Cobham, with her fair companion ; but still the most frequent channel of communication between Seymour and his unhappy wife, was our good old friend, Sir Harry West, from whom she was generally sure to receive some news every week, or at least some comforting assu-

rance that nothing but accidents had delayed the arrival of intelligence from across the channel. While Ida was gone upon any of these errands, Arabella would remain sad and gloomy, and often would take no nourishment for a whole day, if she was absent so long ; and the faithful girl always reluctantly left her, even for a few hours, seeing that she invariably became worse during her absence ; but when the lady was once possessed with the idea that news had been long delayed, that something must have gone wrong with her husband, that he must be ill, or dead,—fancies which frequently assailed her,—Ida, as the lesser of two evils, was fain to go, wherever there was any chance of obtaining information.

Such had been the case one morning, when for several days they had been without any communication with the Court or the city. A greater degree of bustle and activity had been observable in the Tower than usual ; but occupied with their own sad thoughts, neither Arabella nor Ida Mara had given any attention to that which was passing around them, although the servant Cobham had mentioned something of fresh pri-

soners, of a high rank, being added to the number already within the walls. When Ida Mara, however, returned from the house of the Earl of Shrewsbury, to which she had been sent, she entered the lady's chamber in a state of greater agitation than she generally displayed. She strove, indeed, with anxious care for Arabella, to render her own tone and manner as quiet as possible, while sitting down beside her, she proceeded to tell all that she had gathered in her morning's walk.

The first news was, that contrary winds had prevented any vessels arriving from France, for nearly a week, but that intelligence was expected every day. Arabella looked sadly disappointed, and Ida hastened to turn her attention to another theme.

"The whole town is in a commotion, dear lady," she said, "with events which, though terrible and painful, I cannot and will not regret, I told you some days ago that the lieutenant. Sir Gervase Elways, had been removed and arrested, but I did not know the cause."

"And what may it be?" said Arabella, in an

indifferent tone ; “ it matters not to me who is my gaoler, Ida.”

“ No lady,” answered the young Italian ; “ but dark deeds have at length been brought to light ; and justice has been done upon the wicked.”

“ Then there has been a sad clearing of the streets of London, and of the Court too,” replied Arabella.

“ Indeed there has,” said Ida Mara ; “ and some, who I cannot help thinking were your worst enemies, are now close prisoners within these walls.”

“ God have mercy on them !” rejoined the lady, without even inquiring who they were ; “ for they will find none from man,—unless they be very wicked indeed.”

“ I hope they may not,” answered Ida Mara ; “ for it is but fitting that such crimes should be punished. The murderers of Sir Thomas Overbury, lady—”

“ Ha, what of them !” exclaimed Arabella, eagerly.

“ They have been brought to justice, madam,” answered Ida Mara. “ Weston, the principal as-

sassin, was tried some days ago, and executed the day before yesterday, though he, it seems, was only a tool, though a willing one. That dark and terrible man, who called himself Foreman, but whom I knew long ago by the same name of Weston, was, it would appear, the chief agent of the higher fiends who moved the whole."

"And what has become of him?" asked Arabella. "Has he escaped?"

"The vengeance of man he has, but not that of God," replied Ida Mara; "he died suddenly at Lambeth about a fortnight ago, and there is strong suspicion that some of his own poisons, administered to him by the hand of his own son, for the purpose of sooner obtaining possession of his wealth, saved him from public trial and execution. But there are multitudes more involved in this terrible affair. A woman, of the name of Turner, has been hanged this morning at Tyburn. A number, of people, I understand,—ay, ladies of high rank—went to see her die; and Sir Gervase Elways himself was tried yesterday, and condemned to death for murder."

“Heaven help us!” cried Arabella, “that men of station and education, from amongst the once famed gentlemen of England, should dip their hands in such foul and horrible things!”

“Ay, lady,” continued Ida Mara, “but there are higher heads still against which the charge is levelled. He who was lately my Lord of Rochester, now Earl of Somerset, with his fair but wicked Countess, are both imprisoned here as those who set the others on to commit the terrible deed. Their trial is expected every day, and the King vows they shall have no mercy, though men think it somewhat strange that Sir Thomas Monson, the chief agent of the Countess, was yesterday, in the midst of his trial, carried from the bar by the yeomen of the Tower, and the whole proceedings against him stopped.”

“Indeed!” cried Arabella; “indeed! that is very strange. But when the innocent are punished, as I have been, for no offence, we need not wonder that the guilty escape.—So will it be with Somerset, Ida,” she continued; “the

King will not dare, I fear, to strike at one who may possess more secrets than either you or I ever dreamed of."

"At all events, dear lady," answered Ida, "his favour at the Court is gone; and as I cannot but think, that to him you owe much of the persecution you have endured, your appeals, to the King for justice, may have more attention, now that his influence is at an end."

"True, true," cried Arabella, starting up with a look of joy; "I never thought of that. Oh God of heaven grant it!—Quick, bring me paper, dear girl. I will write to the King at once. Perhaps he will listen to me now;" and she sat down and composed one of those touching epistles to James which have more than once brought tears into the eyes of those who read them, even in these far-removed times.

For several days the events which we have mentioned gave her hope; but the heartless tyrant whom she addressed paid no attention to her petition. Days, hours, weeks, slipped away without the slightest change. The guilty Somerset and his beautiful fiend were brought to trial, judged,

and condemned; and then the favour of their vicious sovereign stepped in, and saved them from the death they merited. But poor Arabella derived no benefit from the fall of two beings, who, if there had been justice in the land, should have expiated on the scaffold the manifold crimes too clearly proved against them.

A more terrible fate than death, indeed, awaited them. Sent from the Court to an estate in the country to which they were bound to confine themselves, their dark and criminal love was soon turned to the most deadly hatred. The intense impression of each other's guilt rendered their mutual abhorrence, and its consequences, almost as horrible as their passion and the events which it produced. Living in the same house, seeing each other daily, they dwelt together as strangers, and when the one crossed the path of the other, looks of enmity and scorn came upon those two fair countenances, where once had shone the eager fire of vicious love. Thus passed many a year of painful existence, with the awful prospect of death and retribution before them, till a strange and terrible disease swept the woman from the

earth, and her husband fell lingering into the grave.

With Arabella the last hope faded away, when she found that no change in the Court and councils of the King, produced any favourable result to her ; and with it the powers of life seemed gradually to sink. Slowly, but sadly, the last hour approached, with all the terrible concomitants of weary sickness and wandering intellect ; and the two or three faithful friends, who now almost daily visited her, saw, with mingled grief and relief, that the period of her sufferings would not be long protracted.

One of the most constant of these was good Sir Harry West, in whose conversation she seemed to find more consolation and comfort than in that of any one else, except Ida Mara. With him she was always tranquil, and generally collected. Their conversation was constantly about her husband ; and the good old knight, though he did not strive to buoy her up with those earthly hopes which he knew would prove false, dwelt upon those higher and less frail assurances of happiness at some future period, which

suiting well his years and character, and harmonized also with Arabella's feelings.

On the subject of religion, which was her greatest blessing and comfort now in the hour of her dark adversity, her mind was always as clear and bright, as in those days when, in intellect and virtue, she stood in the midst of a Court, superior to the allurements of the idle vanity and pitiful ambition that characterized it ; but on every other subject reason often failed.

To Sir Harry West she would frequently speak of that painful wandering of thought, that want of control over her own mind, which now too often came upon her.

“ In those moments,” she said one day, “ when there is, as it were, a cloud upon me, and all my ideas seem misty and indistinct, the weight of my sorrow is the most burdensome. I cannot refrain from wishing for death ; and a voice, like that of a fiend, appears to urge me on to seek the calm and tranquil resting-place, where no tyrant's hand can reach, no persecution trouble my repose. I have only, however, to open the page of this Holy Book, to look into the promises there given, to

remember how the only pure and holy One that ever lived and died, suffered without a murmur, and the evil spirit flies, overmatched, and my mind acquires its faculties again. I hope not for life, Sir Harry. I long for death; and have only one wish that I venture to indulge, which is, that I might see once more him whose love has cost me so much misery, though I would not lose that love, if I might win a long life of happiness in exchange."

Sir Harry West made her no reply, but turned the conversation to another theme; and, aided by Ida Mara, who now never left Arabella night nor day, he contrived to wile away another hour of the poor captive's time, without any return of that sad wandering, which she dreaded more herself than even the approach of death. Nevertheless, the old knight, as he turned him home again, pondered deeply over what she had said, and that night visited several of the most influential personages of the Court, with whom his own high character gave him considerable influence.

Ten days passed afterwards, during which he visited the lady several times, but spoke less of

William Seymour than before. Perhaps it was that he saw her strength was now rapidly failing, and feared to touch upon a subject that moved and agitated her much.

The last time he came she was stretched upon a couch, which had been brought into the chamber where she usually sat; and, holding out her hand to him, with a faint smile, she said, "It is coming rapidly, Sir Harry; and this unhappy heart will soon be at peace. I am sure of it, for during the two last days my mind has been quite itself again. The memories of past happiness have come around me sweetly and tenderly, like children round a parent's deathbed; and I am quite prepared to go where they will follow me, and nothing ever take them from me again. Nay, I have made you weep, my friend, and poor Ida, too. I have cost that dear girl many tears, but when I am gone I am sure you will be a father to her.—Is it not so?"

"I will, indeed," answered Sir Harry West; "I owe her far more than that, were it possible to repay the debt."

"There is something more," said Arabella.

“ When I am dead, Sir Harry, tell my dear husband that I loved him to the last ; cut off a lock of my hair with your own hand, and give it to him. It is all that poor Arabella has to send. Tell him that we shall meet hereafter, that I wait for him ; and then none shall separate us.—And now, farewell, kind friend, I must not have you stay. I do believe that we shall never meet again ; for the impression rests upon my mind that the sun which sinks to-night will not rise again for me.”

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the moring of a rough and stormy day, a fishing boat of a large and heavy build, and filled principally with Frenchmen, touched the low beach of the Kentish coast, at the distance of about a mile from Folkstone, near the spot where now stands the pleasant little village of Sandgate. The moment that the boat took ground, a tall and powerful man, habited in dark, but well-fashioned garments, sprang at once in the water, and waded to the shore; then paused for a moment, while one of the fishermen followed him, carrying a small valise, counted out a number of pieces of gold into the man's hand, took the valise from him, and without another word, but "Remember," turned his steps towards the Hythe. Striding on at a rapid pace, he soon reached that place, and paused to look

round for an inn. When he found one, he asked for no refreshment, but inquired eagerly, if he could hire, or buy a horse. One was without difficulty procured to purchase; an old saddle and bridle were added; and mounting, without exchanging one word more than was necessary with any one, the stranger rode on at a quick pace upon the road to London.

The people of the inn gazed after him, commenting as usual on his demeanour; but whatever were their remarks, he troubled not his mind; and at the fullest speed the beast could put forth, he urged the horse on towards the capital. His eyes as he rode, were generally bent down upon the ground; and no change in the gloomy expression of his countenance displayed itself, except when the horse slackened his pace, and then he started, as if from a deep reverie, to urge it on as quickly as before. Twice he stopped to give it water, and once to let it feed; but, while he did so, he stood beside it, uttering not a syllable to any one; and the moment the measure of corn was consumed, he sprang upon its back again, and resumed his

journey. On Wrotham Heath, the animal's strength began to fail; and, at the village beyond, the traveller inquired if he could buy another horse. But none was to be found till he reached Farningham, where at a little inn, which then stood by the roadside, he obtained a wretched beast, for which he paid whatever was demanded, caused the saddle instantly to be placed upon it, and leaving the other behind, with orders to feed it well till the next day, he again rode on, and pursued his way to London, without having tasted food since he touched the English shore, though nearly twelve hours had elapsed and the sun had long set. Through the dark and gloomy streets of the capital, he took his way without pause or inquiry; till he stopped at the gate of a large house, just beyond the city wall, where he sprang to the ground, and rang the bell.

A man with a light opened the doors, and gazed upon the visitor's face, as on that of a stranger. But suddenly a gleam of recognition lighted up the old servant's face, and exclaiming, "Ah! is that you, sir?" he took the rein, threw it over

a hook fixed into the wall for that purpose, and lighted the new comer into the house.

It was towards eleven o'clock on the same night that two gentlemen stood at the great western gate of the Tower, demanding admission.

"That cannot be, Sir Harry," said the warder on duty; "and though I wish to show you all respect, it is against the rule."

"I know it," said Sir Harry West; "but here is an order from the Constable, which supersedes all rule. You will perceive that it is for any hour of the night or day."

"Ay, sir, that is a different affair," replied the man. "Follow me, and I will pass you through the wards. 'Tis well I was not asleep; you might have knocked long enough if I had been."

"Lead on, lead on, my good fellow," said the companion of Sir Harry West, a tall man, wrapped in a large dark mantle.

The warder turned and looked at him; for there is nothing which irritates a slow and deliberate person so much as impatience in another; and perhaps the man might not have quicken-

ed his step in the slightest degree, had there not been that look of stern, anxious grief, in the handsome countenance of the stranger, which almost always exercises a certain degree of power, even over the cold and indifferent.

Moving on without reply, then, he led the two late visitors through the several doors and gates, till Sir Harry said, "Now I can pass on, warder."

"Not without the word, sir," replied the soldier: and giving it, he suffered the gentlemen to proceed alone.

They bent their way straight toward the apartments of Arabella Seymour, and mounting the stairs, knocked at the door. No one answered, and the taller of the two, though it seemed that his hand trembled sadly, lifted the latch at once, and went in. It was a small anteroom that he entered, which was tenanted by only one person, the maid Jane, who was sitting in a chair so sound asleep by the fire, that she had heard no noise. The stranger gave her a look almost fierce; but Sir Harry put his hand upon his arm, saying, "This way, William. We can enter this room, and most likely shall find Ida here."

Without uttering a word, the stranger strode on, and opened the door; but, to the surprise of Sir Harry West, who had imagined that at that late hour Arabella must have retired to her bed-chamber, they found lights and several people there.

Stretched upon the same couch where she had been lying when the old knight visited her in the morning, was the pale form of the once beautiful Arabella Stuart. Ida Mara was kneeling near her head, supporting her, while an old man, dressed as a clergyman, was placing a silver cup to her lips, and pronouncing the solemn words with which the Sacramental wine is offered us in the Communion. At the lady's feet knelt her good servant Cobham; and every one was so intently occupied with the rite which was taking place, that the opening of the door passed unnoticed.

Seymour paused, till the last prayer had been uttered by the chaplain, and Arabella placing her hand over her eyes, had murmured a few words, which were not heard distinctly. The

young gentleman then advanced slowly and as silently as possible ; but the sound of his foot-fall caught his poor wife's ear ; and turning on the couch she exclaimed, " Whose step is that ?—It is he ! It is he—I am sure !—Oh ! Seymour !" and she stretched out her arms towards him.

Seymour rushed forward and caught her to his heart.

" This is a blessing ! This is a blessing !" cried Arabella ; " now I am ready to die.—Speak to me, Seymour ! Speak to your Arabella ! "

But Seymour could not ; for he had buried his eyes upon her bosom, and tears drowned all utterance.

" Nay," she continued, " nay, Seymour, do not grieve so bitterly ! I am happy and contented now I have seen you once more ! God has heard my anxious prayer. I have nothing more to look for in life ; I am ready to obey His summons."

" Oh, live, live ! my Arabella !" cried Seymour, raising his head and kissing her eagerly ; " live yet for happiness ! The connivance which

has been given to my return, the order for my admission here, all make me hope that the King will yet relent."

"He knows that I am dying, Seymour," replied Arabella; "otherwise he had not consented. But still, William, I will live for happiness, and happiness with you in a world where real happiness only is known. We may be parted once more, for a brief space of time.—To you, indeed, it may seem long; for you will have to struggle with the cares and sorrows of earth; but, when you arrive at the end and look back, it will seem but an hour. I know it by experience.—But let me look at you," she continued; "I had thought I should never see that dear face again.—You are changed, my love, and worn; but I know that your heart is unaltered.—How much have I to be thankful for, that the hands I love best will close my eyes, the lips I love best receive my parting breath, and that soon I shall be gone from a world of misery, to wait for you where misery is at an end!"

It was in vain that she sought to give him

consolation ; the very resignation she displayed, the gentleness, the tenderness, but added poignancy to his regret ; and while the weak and dying girl was calm, collected, and content, the strong man was overwhelmed with sorrow, agony, and repining terrible to witness.

For about half an hour the unexpected arrival of her husband seemed to have given Arabella new life ; her voice had become strong and clear ; the dimness which had spread over her eyes was removed ; even the grey shade which coming dissolution had cast over the face, fled for a short time, and during a few minutes a pale pink glow, like the last which tinges the evening sky, arose in her cheek.

To Seymour those signs gave no hope, for the terrible change which had taken place in her since last he had held her in his arms, had come upon him suddenly, and spoke too plainly of speedy death for him to entertain a doubt. To Ida Mara, however, the alteration which had taken place during the last two or three years, in that sweet lady's appearance, had been so gradual that she knew not how great it was ;

and the signs that she saw of reviving life, did give a faint and trembling hope, that the fiat of the Almighty had not gone forth irrevocably.

It was soon extinguished, however; the effects of joy speedily passed away; and, only the more rapidly for the temporary relief, the great enemy of life made progress in his conquest: The voice sank low again, the film came over the eyes, the colour faded from the cheek, the brow and temples grew awfully pale, the greyness of the tomb once more spread over the whole countenance."

"She is departing," said the chaplain, in a low voice.

Arabella's eyes sought her husband's face; but it seemed as if she did not see him.

"William," she said; "William, keep close to me!—It is coming, my beloved, it is coming! do not leave me!"

"I am here, dear one, I am here," replied Seymour, gazing in agony upon her countenance. "My arms are round thee, Arabella. I will not leave thee; would I could go with thee!"

“ I am very cold, William,” she said. “ William,—William—”

Her voice ceased, and, with a slight shudder, the fair, pure spirit passed from its earthly prison and a tyrant’s will, to freedom, and the presence of the King of Kings.

“ She is gone !” said Sir Harry West ; “ she is gone ! God receive your soul, sweet girl !”

But Seymour still held her in his arms, and bending down his eyes upon the inanimate form of her he loved, wept long and bitterly. When he raised them at length, and gazed upon her face, he was surprised to see a smile upon her lips. He almost fancied that he had deceived himself, that she still lived. But it was fixed and immovable, only to be changed by the slow decay of the tomb.

“ How sweet she looks,” said Sir Harry West in a whisper to the chaplain. “ I have often heard, that the look we bore in infancy, comes back upon us after death.”

“ With those who have lived a good life,” replied the clergyman, in the same tone ; “ and one has but to gaze upon that face to see that

she has departed to peace and rest.—Be comforted, sir,” he said, advancing and taking William Seymour’s hand; “be comforted. If ever there was one for whose release from a life of care and sorrow, those she has left behind should rejoice rather than mourn, it was this sweet lady. Here on earth, she had nothing to expect but misery. Where she is gone, she has nothing to meet with but joy and glory. Pure and blameless in her life, full of faith and truth, relying on the atonement of her Saviour to wipe out the only stain upon her, the stain of Adam’s fault, we cannot, we dare not doubt, that joy will be her portion for evermore.”

“It were worse than blasphemy!” said Sir Harry West.

“True, true,” answered Seymour; “I know it is so; I know these tears are selfish; but tell me, can a man lose the brightest possession that God has given him, and remain to linger on through years, destitute of that which made life valuable, and yet not mourn?—Bless thee, my sweet wife!” he continued, bending down and kissing her cold brow. “May I soon join

thee ! for, did the Almighty's will give me back all that I have lost but thee, ay, and add state and station, wealth, and high command, friends, honours, glory, all that earth can afford, I still have lost the jewel of my soul, which nothing but another world can restore.—I dare not, sir," he added, turning to the chaplain, "in the presence of my departed saint, call down upon the heads of those that wronged her, the vengeance which is their due ; but sure I am that the retributive hand of Heaven will not be idle ; and that for such deeds as these, when Almighty forbearance is exhausted, due payment will be given.—Ay, I am sure of it, on him and on his race, shall descend the awful curse that plagues the wicked from generation to generation. From father unto son it shall extend, and one shall lay the foundation of the other's downfall. Blood and destruction, sorrow and dishonour, defeat, disgrace, and desolation, shall haunt them to remote posterity ; and the life and sufferings of Arabella Stuart shall stand upon the page of History, to justify, even in the eyes of men the terrible vengeance of a righteous God."

“Hush, I beseech you, hush!” exclaimed the chaplain; “remember such words repeated—”

“I fear him not,” replied William Seymour, vehemently; “he has taken from me the life of my life; and he can but send me to join her somewhat sooner. Oh that he would—the crime were his, then, not mine; and were it not for the fatal promise I have sealed with honour to stay but four and twenty hours within these realms, I would beard him on his throne, and tell him of all his infamy.—Nay, my kind friend,” he added, speaking to Sir Harry West, who advanced and took his hand; “I will keep my word; but, had I not poured forth the indignation of my heart, I think that it would have broken.—Now leave me here for a short time; I would fain spend an hour in sad and solemn thought beside her I so dearly loved. I shall be calmer then; for I will try to pray, and seek submission to the will of God.—If you will wait for me that time, Sir Harry, I will take my last leave of all I loved on earth, and gladly quitting these hated shores, will seek in other lands for some tranquillity.”

No one opposed his request ; but leaving him alone with the dead body of Arabella, Sir Harry West and Ida Mara remained in the anteroom till the clock struck one.

That sound seemed to rouse William Seymour ; for, a few minutes after he came forth, with a countenance sad and stern, but calmer than before.

Advancing at once to Ida Mara, he took her hand, and gazed in her face, for a moment or two without being able to speak. At length, however, he said, “How can I ever thank you ? God will reward your long-devoted love for her, whom he has smitten. Leave her not, Ida ; leave her not, I beseech you, till she is committed to the earth ; and then remember, that I shall always believe, whatsoever I can do to protect and make you happy, is done for her. Sir Harry West I know will watch over your fate : but there is nothing which you can require, and he can ask on your behalf, that will not give me consolation to perform.—Now, good friends, I am ready, my last adieu is said.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE funeral of Arabella was over ; and her grave was made, amongst the mighty of the land, in the Abbey of Westminster. Two months had passed ; and Ida Mara, in deep mourning, sat in the hall of Sir Harry West's house, occupied in the usual task of embroidery. The good knight had left her about half an hour before.—Mr. Crompton, who, as the reader may remember, had aided in the escape from Highgate, and was a frequent visitor at the house, having desired to speak with him alone.

Ida was still busily engaged upon her task, with her mind occupied with sad and serious thoughts—though the deep grief which she felt for the loss of her, to whom she had been so sincerely attached, had naturally subsided in some degree under the balmy power of time

—when Sir Harry returned, with a grave, and somewhat agitated air.

“Put down your needle, my dear Ida,” said, the old knight, “and listen to me. I have something to tell you of importance.”

“What is the matter, dear Sir Harry?” she exclaimed, gazing at him eagerly. “You are moved. Something has grieved you.”

“No, indeed, Ida,” replied Sir Harry West, “it is not exactly grief, though perhaps I am going to lose you; but if it is for your happiness, my dear child, I shall be content.”

“To lose me?” cried Ida Mara, turning deadly pale; “are you going to send me away from you?”

“No, not to send you,” replied Sir Harry, “but perhaps you may think fit to go, when you hear what I have to say.—You know Mr. Crompton; he is a gentleman of good family, of honour, and high principles,—kind and generous in heart, and though not very wealthy, has sufficient for happiness. Often having seen you with the Lady Arabella, and deeply touched with those high qualities which you have displayed towards

her, and indeed towards every one, he asks your hand."

"Oh no, no, no," cried Ida Mara, with all her Italian eagerness; "tell him, I beseech you, Sir Harry, I am unworthy of the honour he intends me. Explain to him that I spring from another class.—Tell my origin—tell him how you first found me, a poor Italian girl, homeless, friendless, destitute."

"I have told him all," replied Sir Harry West, "I judged it right to do so; and he thinks as I do, Ida, that such virtues, graces, and goodness, as you possess, form a better inheritance than stored-up gold, or even a noble name.—The only question is, Ida, do you — can you love him?"

Ida paused, and Sir Harry felt her hand, which he had taken, tremble violently.

"No," she said at length; "no, I cannot."

"But why?" asked the old knight; "he is handsome in person, gentle and kind in demeanour."

She shook her head sorrowfully. "I cannot love him," she answered. "You will think me wrong, I fear, Sir Harry, to wish rather to remain

dependent on your bounty, than change it for any other fate on earth."

"I do not think you wrong, my dear child," replied Sir Harry, "all I have is yours; for to you I owe whatever remains to me of life. But you must give me a decided answer; for I must deal plainly with this gentleman."

"My answer is plain, my benefactor," replied Ida, "I cannot love him; I cannot wed him."

"Good faith, then, dear Ida," said the old knight with a smile; "if you will not wed any one else, I shall be fain to marry you myself."

"What is that you said?" exclaimed Ida, with the light coming into her eyes. "What is that you said?"

"I was but jesting, Ida," answered the knight; and immediately the blood rushed up into her cheek, and spread rosy over her forehead. "I was but jesting," repeated Sir Harry West; but Ida was very much agitated; and thinking he had pained her, he added, "I am well aware, my dear child, that however great may be the comfort and happiness to me, to have you with me during my latter years, however deeply and tenderly

I may love you, I must not, and ought not to desire that you should sacrifice all for me."

"I would sacrifice all, everything for you," cried Ida Mara eagerly. "I never, never wish to quit you—"

"Hear me, Ida ; hear me," said Sir Harry West ; "your sense of duty and gratitude I know is unbounded, but the time may come when you will find some one to love—"

"No," answered Ida ; "no, I shall never love any one but you.—If you send me from you, I shall die ;" and sinking down into a chair, with a pale cheek and a quivering lip, she covered her eyes with her hand.

"What is the matter, dear Ida ?" said the knight tenderly ; "you seem ill ; what is it that you feel ?"

"I do not know, I do not know," she answered. —"Oh, leave me, Sir Harry, and tell this gentleman that I grieve I cannot return his affection."

"He is gone, Ida," answered the knight ; "but I have promised to write to him. If I merely say that you cannot return his affection, he will ask to be permitted to pursue his suit."

“ Oh no, no !” cried Ida, clasping her hands, “ he must not, — I cannot, — tell him — tell him—”

“ Tell him what, Ida ?” asked Sir Harry West, not a little agitated himself. “ Shall I tell him that you love another ?” he added, in a low and serious voice.

The crimson again rushed into her face, and she paused for a moment, casting down her eyes. Then raising them suddenly, she exclaimed, in Italian, with all the wild vehemence which, derived from her nation and the climate of her birth, had characterized her demeanour, before she had passed through so many scenes of sad and wearing anxiety,

“ Yes, yes !—Tell him I love another ! ”

“ Indeed ?” cried Sir Harry West, with a cheek somewhat pale:—for, strange to say, he could more readily have borne to hear her say, that she was ready to give her hand with indifference, than to listen to an acknowledgment that she loved. “ Ida must tell me whom it is she loves ; and I promise her, that nothing on earth shall be wanting on my part to promote her happiness.

Tell me, Ida, tell me," he continued, seeing that she stood silent ; " tell me, I adjure you. If you have any consideration, regard, affection for me, keep me not in suspense, but tell me who is this. Nay, Ida, I beseech, I entreat."

Ida gazed at him for a moment, with her trembling lips apart, then cast herself into his arms, and with streaming eyes hid her glowing face upon his shoulder.

" Who ? " said the knight.

She answered in a whisper. It was only one word ; but Sir Harry West's eyes brightened.

" Indeed, indeed, my Ida !" he cried, still holding her to his heart ; " and you willingly sacrifice all the bright and sunny part of life, to be an old man's darling ? "

" I would rather," answered the girl, looking up, " I would rather be an old man's darling, than a young man's neglected wife. All I ask is, to remain with you for ever ; never to quit you ; to see you always, hear you always ; and to give up my life to him who first protected me, first was kind to me, whom I have ever loved, and ever

shall love better than any one on earth. Call me what you will, your child, your servant, anything!—But send me not from you.”

“No, no, Ida,” answered Sir Harry West, with a smile lighting up his fine, though somewhat worn countenance; “you have chosen your part; you have made up your mind. If you stay at all, it is as my wife.”

“Oh with what joy!” she cried “But I forget.—Am I fit to be your wife? What will your relations, your high friends, say, at your marrying the poor Italian girl?”

“Let them say what they will,” replied Sir Harry. “There will be gibes and scoffs enow at the old man marrying a girl young enough to be his daughter—ay, his granddaughter. They will say, he is in his dotage, Ida, and predict all sorts of evil results.”

“They will speak false,” she cried vehemently; “and if they did but know all that I owe to you—”

“And all I owe to you, Ida,” rejoined the knight, “they might comprehend the feelings

that actuate us both. I look to you, dear one, whatever be their prophecies, to give them the lie."

"I will do it," replied Ida Mara; and she kept her word, leaving on record, that for once the marriage of a man of more than sixty with a girl of two-and-twenty, produced happiness to both.

THE END.

LONDON :

Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

ARABELLA
STUART.

A ROMANCE
FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

BY G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF
"HARNLEY," "DE L'ORME,"
"THE FALSE HEIR," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 069046461